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THE SEA-GULL

(LA GAVIOTA).

FROM THE SPANISH OF FERNAN CABALLERO.

By THE HON. AUGUSTA BETHELL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE rapidly growing interest in England for everything connected with Spain, leads to the hope that this translation of a graphic picture of the Spaniards of all classes, as drawn by one of the most eminent of their modern writers, will be well received.

The name of Fernan Caballero, which is the *nom de plume* adopted by Doña Cecilia Faber, has been several times of late brought to the notice of the English public by recent writers on Spain, who have borne testimony to the high esteem in which her works are held in that country and on the

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Continent generally. The novels are also favourably mentioned in an article in the 'Edinburgh Review' of July, 1861. By adhering, as closely as possible, to a strictly literal translation, it is hoped that the character and spirit of the original have been preserved.

Some few omissions have been made, viz.: —Several pages of purely local description, which the Author herself, in an apologetic note, confesses to be "*demasiado prolija*" (too prolix), and two or three other passages, which it was thought might prove tedious or distasteful to the English reader.

These omissions, however, in no way affect the tenour of the story.

March 11, 1867.

THE SEA-GULL.

(LA GAVIOTA.)

CHAPTER I.

In the month of November, 1836, the steamer 'Royal Sovereign' bore away from the foggy shores of Falmouth, lashing the waves with her paddles, and unfurling her gray and damp sails, in a mist even grayer and damper than they.

The interior of the vessel presented the disagreeable spectacle usual to the beginning of a sea voyage. The passengers were crowded together, contending with the horrors of sea-sickness; the women

in every imaginable attitude, with dishevelled hair, disordered dresses, and crushed bonnets; the men pale and ill-tempered; the children deserted and in tears, and the servants with staggering steps carrying tea, coffee, and other imaginary remedies, to those who were ill; while the vessel, Queen of the waters, careless of the sufferings she occasioned, battled with the waves, mastering them when they offered resistance, and pursuing them closely when they yielded. Walking the deck were those who were saved from the common evil by peculiarity of constitution, or by having been long inured to the sea. Among these was the governor of an English colony, a tall, handsome man, accompanied by two aides-de-camp. Others wrapped in mackintoshes, their hands in their pockets, with flushed or pale faces, appeared generally discomposed and uncomfortable. In

short, this beautiful ship seemed to have been transformed into the abode of misery.

Conspicuous among the passengers was a young man, about twenty-four years of age, in whose quiet, gentlemanly manners, and calm, handsome features, no sign of discomposure could be perceived. He was tall and well-made, of graceful and dignified carriage, his dark hair curled over his high, white forehead, and the expression of his large black eyes was at once soft and penetrating. His lips, shaded by a small black moustache, wore a pleasing, intelligent smile, and nobility of rank and mind could be clearly traced in his general bearing, even in his walk and gestures, yet without the slightest symptom of that hauteur which some unjustly attribute to superiority of any kind.

He was travelling for pleasure, and though essentially a good man, was not impelled by any sentiment of virtuous anger to wage

war with the vices and follies of society. In other words, he did not feel that it was his vocation to tilt at windmills like Don Quixote.

His physiognomy, easy manners, the peculiar grace with which he wore his cloak, and his disregard of the cold and of the general discomfort, proved him, beyond doubt, to be a Spaniard.

He walked about, observing with quick glances the various people whom chance had brought together on those planks; but there was little to observe in men who staggered about as if intoxicated, or in women who were pale and inanimate as the dead.

Nevertheless, his interest was greatly excited by the family of an English officer, whose wife had arrived on board so ill that it was necessary to carry her to her cabin. Soon after the same service was rendered to the nurse, and then the father followed,

carrying an infant in his arms, leaving three other little creatures of two, three, and four years of age, on the deck, with strict injunctions to be good, and to stay quietly where he had placed them. The poor children, who apparently had been brought up with great strictness, remained as immoveable and silent as the angels pictured at the feet of the Virgin.

By degrees the bright colour faded from their cheeks, and their large, widely-opened eyes grew dull and heavy, but no movement or complaint betrayed their sufferings, which, however, could easily be discerned in their pale, sad faces.

Nobody came to their assistance in this silent torture, in this sad and gentle resignation.

The Spaniard was about to call the steward, when he heard him replying impatiently to a young man, who, speaking in German,

seemed, by expressive gestures, to be asking help for these forsaken little creatures. As, however, the young man's personal appearance indicated neither elegance nor distinction, and as he could only speak German, the steward turned his back on him, saying he couldn't understand him. Upon this the German went down to his berth in the fore-cabin, returning quickly with a pillow, a counterpane, and a thick coat. With these he made a kind of bed, on which he laid the children, covering them up with the greatest care. But scarcely had he done so when they were taken violently ill, and in an instant the pillow, coverlet, and greatcoat were entirely spoiled.

The Spaniard looked at the German, on whose face he could only discover a smile of benevolent satisfaction, which seemed to say, "Thank God! they will be better now."

He spoke to him in English, French, and

in Spanish, but received no other reply than an ungraceful bow and the words, "Ich verstehe nicht" (I don't understand).

After dinner, when the Spaniard went on deck again, it had become much colder. He wrapped himself in his cloak and walked up and down, passing and repassing the German, who, seated on a bench, was gazing intently at the sea which was displaying its pearls of foam and diamonds of phosphoric light on the sides of the vessel. The youth was dressed very lightly, for his greatcoat was useless, and without it he must have been dreadfully cold.

The Spaniard approached him, and then drew back, not knowing in what language to begin the conversation. Suddenly he smiled as if a happy idea struck him, and going straight up to the other, said in Latin, "You must be very cold."

His voice and words seemed to please the

foreigner, and with a smile he replied in the same language,—

"The night is certainly very cold; but I was not thinking of that."

"Of what then were you thinking?" asked the Spaniard.

"Of my father and mother, and of my dear brothers and sisters."

"Why do you travel then, if you feel the separation so much?"

"Ah! señor,—necessity;—that implacable despot—"

"Then you are not travelling for pleasure?"

"Pleasure belongs to the rich, and I am poor! For my pleasure! . . . . If you only knew the motive of my journey, you would see how far it is from being an agreeable one."

"Where then are you going?"

"To the war,—the civil war,—the most terrible of all wars,—to Navarra."

"To the war!" exclaimed the Spaniard, looking with surprise at the German, whose appearance was mild, and almost humble; in fact, anything but warlike. "You are a soldier, then?"

"No, that is not my calling. Neither my inclination nor my principles would lead me to bear arms, unless it were to defend the holy cause of the independence of Germany, if it were ever again attacked by foreigners. I am going to the army of Navarra, to take service as a surgeon."

"And you don't understand the language?"

"No, señor; but I shall learn it."

"Nor do you know the country?"

"Not at all. I have never quitted my own village, except to go to the University."

"I suppose you have letters of introduction?"

"None."

"Do you depend on any interest?"

"I know no one in Spain."

"On what, then, do you depend?"

"On knowledge of my profession; on my readiness to work; on my youth, and my trust in God."

At these words the Spaniard preserved a thoughtful silence. He felt strongly interested in the German, and even affected, as he looked at his face, expressive of so much candour and gentleness, wearing a sad but at the same time confiding smile, and lighted up by blue eyes pure as those of a child.

After a short pause, he said,—"Will you come below and take a glass of punch with me, to keep out the cold?"

The German bowed, and followed the other to the saloon, where some punch was brought to them.

At the head of the table were seated the Governor and his two aides-de-camp; at one side were two Frenchmen; the Spaniard

and the German placed themselves at the bottom. "What made you think of going to our unfortunate country?" inquired the former.

In reply, the German gave him a true history of his life. He was the sixth son of a professor living in a small town in Saxony, who had spent all he possessed on the education of his sons. When the one with whom we are now acquainted left the University, he found, like many poor young men in Germany, that after devoting his youth to deep study of his profession, and practising his art under the best masters, he had very little chance of obtaining employment so as to gain a livelihood. His maintenance being a burden on his family, he made up his mind, with true German philosophy, and without allowing himself to feel disheartened, to set out for Spain, where, unhappily, the terrible war of the North gave him hopes of finding

a field for his services. "Under the linden trees which shade the door of my home," he said, as he concluded his story, "I embraced for the last time my father, my darling mother, my sister Lotte, and my little brothers, who cried to come with me on my wanderings. Thus, in tears, I entered the path of life which so many find strewed with flowers. But I do not despair: man is born to labour, and Heaven will crown my efforts. I love my profession, because it is a grand and noble one; its object being to relieve the sufferings of others, the result is therefore beautiful, even though the task may be painful."

"Your name is—?"

"Fritz Stein," replied the German, half rising and bowing slightly.

Soon after this the new friends left the saloon. One of the Frenchmen, who happened to be opposite the door, saw the

Spaniard, as they reached the companion-ladder, throw his beautiful cloak lined with fur, over the German's shoulders, and then escape to his cabin, refusing to listen to any remonstrances on the part of the other.

"Could you make out what they said?" asked the other Frenchman.

"To tell the truth," replied the first, who was a commercial traveller, "Latin is hardly my strong point; but that fair, pale youth appears to me to be one of the weeping Werther kind. I heard something about Charlotte and the children, in his story, just as in the German novel; but instead of running to pistols for consolation, he seeks it in punch, which, if not quite as romantic, is much more philosophical and German. As for the Spaniard, I take him to be a Don Quixote, protector of the helpless, a would-be St. Martin dividing his cloak with the poor. Add to which his haughty looks, firm

penetrating glances, and face pale as the moonlight, and you have an unmistakeable Spaniard."

"You know," said the other, "that as a historical painter, I am going to Tarifa to paint a picture of the siege of that city, at the moment when the son of Guzman makes a sign to his father, to give him up as a sacrifice sooner than surrender the place. If this young man would only sit to me as a model, my picture would be a sure success. I have never before seen nature so nearly approach the ideal."

"Just like an artist, always poetical!" replied his friend. "For my part, if I don't deceive myself, I should say, judging from the man's graceful appearance, his womanish foot, and the elegant turn of his waist, that he is a bull-fighter. Perhaps he is the famous Montes himself, who, besides the other points of likeness, is both rich and generous."

"A bull-fighter!" exclaimed the artist, "one of the people! You must be joking."

"Not at all," said the other. "I am very far from doing so. You have never lived in Spain as I have, and therefore don't know the aristocratic appearance of the people. You will see! you will see! My opinion is, that, thanks to the progress of equality and fraternity, these provoking aristocratic airs are becoming extinguished, and in a short time will only be met with in Spain among the lower orders."

"The idea of taking this man for a bull-fighter," said the artist, with such a contemptuous smile that the other, vexed by his manner rose quickly, saying,—

"We can easily find out which is right. Come along, and we'll ask his servant."

The two friends went up on deck, where they soon found the man they sought. The commercial traveller, who spoke a little

Spanish, entered into conversation with him, and, after a few commonplace remarks, asked,

"Has your master gone to bed?"

"Yes, señor," replied the servant, giving him a cunning, mischievous look.

"Is he very rich?"

"I am not his steward,—only his valet,"

"Is he travelling on business?"

"I don't know that he is."

"Does he travel for the sake of his health?"

"He is very well."

"Is he travelling incognito?"

"No, señor; under his own name."

"Which is—?"

"Don Carlos de la Cerda."

"An illustrious name, by heaven!" exclaimed the artist.

"Mine is Pedro de Guzman," added the Spaniard; "and I am your very humble servant."

So saying, he made them a very low bow, and retired.

"Gil Blas is right," said the Frenchman; "there is nothing so common in Spain as high-sounding names. It is true that my shoemaker at Paris is called Martel, my tailor Roland, and my laundress Madame Bayard. In Scotland there are more Stuarts than paving-stones. We have been taken in! That rogue of a servant has been making game of us. On consideration, however, I suspect his master is an agent of the rebels,—a small spy of Don Carlos."

"Not he," retorted the artist. "He is my Alonso Perez de Guzman, the Good,—the hero of my dreams."

His friend shrugged his shoulders.

When the boat arrived at Cadiz, the Spaniard said to Stein, on taking leave of him,—

"I find that I shall be detained some time in Andalusia, but my servant, Pedro, will

accompany you to Seville, and take a place for you in the diligence to Madrid. Here are two letters of recommendation; one to the Minister of War, the other to the general in command of the army. If at any time you are in need of a friend, write to me at Madrid to this address."

Stein could not speak from sheer emotion. With one hand he took the letters, with the other put back the card which the Spaniard held out to him.

"Your name is engraved here," he said at length, placing his hand on his heart. "Ah! while I live I shall never forget it. I have only to think of the most noble-hearted, generous-minded, and best of men."

"But with that address," replied Don Carlos, smiling, "your letters might never reach me. You must have a clearer and shorter one:" and, putting the card into his hand, he took his leave.

Looking at it, Stein read,

"*The Duke of Almansa*—"

and Pedro de Guzman, who was close by, added,—

"— Marquis de Guadalmonte, de Val de Flores, and de Roca Fiel; Count of Santa Clara, de Encinasola and de Lara. Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and Grand Cross of Carlos III. Gentleman of the Chamber to his Majesty, Grandee of Spain of the first class, etc., etc., etc."

CHAPTER II.

One morning in October, 1838, a man might have been seen making his way on foot from a village in the County of Niebla to the nearest seaport. Such was his impatience to arrive there that, hoping to shorten the way, he struck across one of those vast plains so common in the south of Spain,—real deserts abandoned to the breeding of wild cattle, whose herds never wander beyond their boundaries. The traveller, though in reality not more than twenty-six years of age, appeared much older. He wore a military frock-coat, buttoned to the chin, a shabby old forage-cap on his head, and carried over

his shoulder a thick stick, from which hung a small mahogany box, covered with green baize, a packet of books, a handkerchief containing some linen, and a greatcoat rolled up. His strength seemed scarcely equal to even this light burden, and every now and then he stopped, pressing his hand on his chest, or on his burning forehead, often looking sorrowfully at a poor dog who followed him, and who, at each of these halts, stretched himself panting at his feet.

"Poor Trusty," said his master, "the only being who makes me feel that there is a little affection and gratitude still left in the world. I shall never forget the day when I first saw you! You were with a poor shepherd, who was condemned to be shot because he wouldn't turn traitor. He was on his knees, expecting his death every moment, and striving, in vain, to drive you from his side. He entreated that you might be taken away,

but nobody ventured to touch you. The volley was fired, and you, faithful friend in adversity, fell, cruelly wounded, by the dead body of your master. I took charge of you, cured your wounds, and since then you have never left me. When I was laughed at in the regiment, and called the '*dog doctor*,' you came and licked my hand as much as to say 'dogs are grateful.' Oh, my God! how I once loved my fellow-creatures. It is now two years, since full of life, hope, and good-will, I arrived in this country, to devote my time, talents, and heart, to the good of others. I have cured many wounds, and in return I have received many in my soul. Great God! My heart is broken. Here am I ignominiously dismissed from the army after two years' service, after two years of incessant labour, persecuted and treated as a criminal, merely because I tried to relieve the sufferings of a man belonging to the

opposite party—a poor creature who, hunted like a wild beast, fell dying into my arms. Can it be possible that the laws of war should turn into a crime an action demanded both by humanity and religion? And now what can I do? Where shall I find rest for my prematurely gray hairs and wounded heart? Under the linden-trees at home? There, at least, I shall not be blamed for having pitied a dying man!"

After a short pause the unhappy man roused himself, and calling his dog, pursued his wearisome journey. But in a little while he lost the narrow path worn by the shepherds' feet, which he had hitherto followed, and found himself in the midst of brambles, briars, and thick bushes, which increased at every step, so that it was impossible to follow a straight line, and he was obliged to wind in and out among them, in order to make any progress. The sun was sinking,

and no sign could be perceived of any human habitation; a boundless plain was before him, a desert, green and uniform as the ocean.

Fritz Stein, whom our readers have doubtless recognized, found out too late that in his impatience he had given himself credit for more strength than he really possessed. His swollen and tender feet could hardly carry him; his heart beat violently, his temples ached, and he suffered from intense thirst. To add to the horror of his situation loud and prolonged bellowings announced the neighbourhood of some of those wild bulls so dangerous in Spain.

"God has saved me from many dangers," thought the unfortunate traveller; "if it be His will, He can protect me in this one; if not, His will be done."

He quickened his pace as much as was possible; but what was his terror when,

after passing through a small plantation of mastic-trees, he found himself face to face with a bull! Stein stood as if petrified. The animal, taken aback by the unexpected meeting, as well as by so much apparent boldness, remained also perfectly motionless; his large, fierce eyes glaring like two live coals. The traveller felt that at the slightest movement he was lost. The bull, conscious of his strength and courage, waited to be provoked,—throwing his head up and down with impatience, he pawed the ground, stirring up clouds of dust as a signal of defiance. Stein stood firm. The animal took a step backwards, lowered his head, and was rushing forward to the charge, when he felt himself bitten in the hind legs. At the same moment, a furious barking told Stein that he had been saved by his faithful companion.

The bull, enraged, turned to repel this unexpected attack, and, taking advantage of

the movement, Stein fled. Horror of the position from which he had so narrowly escaped, gave him strength to run into the plantations of evergreen oaks and mastics, whose thickness sheltered him from his formidable enemy. After passing through a little valley, he ascended some rising ground, and, almost breathless, turned to look back on the scene of his perilous adventure.

Between the trees, at some distance, he could see the ferocious animal tossing his poor dog in the air. Stein, much affected, stretched out his arms towards his faithful and brave companion, saying, "Poor, poor Trusty! My only friend! How justly you were named! How dearly you have paid for the affection you have borne your masters."

To escape from this painful sight, Stein hastened on, shedding many tears.

In a short time he arrived at the summit,

of another hill, which commanded a beautiful view. The ground descended almost imperceptibly towards the sea, which calm and tranquil, reflecting the last rays of the sun, shone like a vast field sown with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. Standing out in the midst of all this splendour was the white sail of a ship, like a pearl, set as it were, in the golden waves.

The beach was covered with yellow sand, fringed by the soft waves' silvery foam, and here and there rose up gigantic rocks, which appeared proud of having so long resisted the attacks of the mighty ocean. To the left could be seen, in the distance, the ruins of a fort—man's work, and therefore not lasting; its base was the rock—God's work, and therefore everlasting. On the right, at the top of a hill, he perceived a pile of buildings, but at that distance could not distinguish whether it were a village, a palace

with its offices, or a convent. Towards this point he directed his steps, but, exhausted by his efforts and recent emotion, it was night before he reached it. The building was one of those monasteries raised in the olden days of enthusiastic faith. It had formerly been rich and hospitable, giving bread to the poor, and bestowing help on all who were in need, whether spiritual or physical; but now it was empty, poor, and dismantled. It had been offered for sale for a mere song, but as yet remained unsold.

The bell-tower, despoiled of its legitimate ornament, reared itself like a gigantic spectre, from the empty sockets of whose eyes the light of life has departed. A white marble cross still stood before the entrance, its half-ruined pedestal causing it to lean on one side as if bowed down by sorrow. The gate, formerly open to all who chose to enter, was now shut and fastened.

Stein's strength forsook him, and he sank almost insensible on a stone bench near the door. His brain whirled in a tumult, and, in the delirium of fever, it seemed to him that the waves of the sea were swallowing him up, that the moon was looking down in pale astonishment, and that the stars were dancing before his eyes with mocking glances. He heard again the bellowing of bulls, and fancied that one came from behind the cross and tossed the lifeless body of his dog to his feet. Everything appeared to turn round and round the unhappy man, his ideas were becoming more and more confused, when he was suddenly aroused by a clear, shrill sound—the crowing of a cock.

This rural, domestic sound seemed to waken his faculties, and rising, he staggered with great difficulty to the door, and knocked at it with a stone. The violent barking of a dog was the only reply. Making another

effort he knocked again, and fell to the ground insensible.

The door opened and two persons appeared: one a young woman with a candle in her hand, who, on perceiving the figure of a man at her feet, started back, crying out, "Good God! It isn't Manuel, but a stranger, and apparently dead. What can be done?"

"We must do our best for him," said the other, who was an old woman, very neatly dressed. "Brother Gabriel! Brother Gabriel!" she called out; "come quickly, here is a poor man who is dying."

Quick but heavy steps were heard approaching. They were those of an old man of middle height, whose calm, placid face indicated a pure and simple heart. His costume was somewhat grotesque, consisting of a pair of pantaloons and a loose jacket of gray serge, made something like a lay

brother's habit; sandals on his feet, and a black woollen cap on his bald shiny head.

"Brother Gabriel," said the old woman, "we must help this poor man."

"We must help this poor man," repeated Brother Gabriel.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the young woman with the candle, "how can we take a dying man in here?"

"Daughter," replied the other, "if no other place can be found, I will give my own bed up to him."

"And you will take him into the house without knowing who he is?"

"What does that matter?" asked the old woman. "The proverb says, 'Do what is right, without respect of persons.' Come, help me—lend a hand to the work."

Dolores obeyed, her zeal mingled with fear.

"When Manuel returns," she said, "I hope he won't be very angry."

"Shall a son question his mother's actions?" said the old woman.

By the united exertions of the three, Stein was carried into Brother Gabriel's room, where a bed was made up for him with a large woollen mattress and some fresh straw, tia* Maria adding a pair of coarse, but clean, sheets, and a blanket, which she took out of a large chest.

Brother Gabriel wished to give up his pillow, but to this tia Maria would not consent, saying that she had two, and could sleep very well with one. Stein was soon undressed and put into bed. In the meanwhile, several knocks were heard at the entrance-door. "There is Manuel," said his

* *Tio* and *Tia* are titles of respect given to old men and women in Spain. They answer to our gossip, or granny—the literal meaning is uncle (tio), aunt (tia).

wife. "Come with me, mother; I don't wish to be alone with him, when he hears that we have admitted a stranger without knowing who he is."

Maria followed her daughter-in-law to the door.

"God be praised! Good evening, mother; good evening, wife," said a tall, well-made man, some thirty-eight or forty years of age, who entered, followed by a boy of thirteen, or thereabouts. "Come, Momo,* unload the ass, and take her to the stable; the poor beast can't help herself."

Momo obeyed, bringing into the kitchen, where the family spent their evenings, a large supply of loaves of white bread, some well-filled saddle-bags, and his father's thick coat. Then, taking up Golondrina's† halter, he went to the stable.

* Short for Jeronimo, in Andalusia.

† "Swallow," name of the ass.

"Have you brought the starch and the soap?" asked Dolores of her husband, after shutting the door.

"Yes, here they are."

"And my flax?" inquired his old mother.

"I had a good mind to forget it," he replied, smiling, handing her several hanks at the same time.

"And why, my son?"

"I was reminded of the story of the villager who went to the fair, and whom all the neighbours loaded with commissions.

"'Bring me a hat,' said one; 'a pair of gaiters,' said another. A cousin wanted a comb, an aunt some chocolate, and for all these purchases nobody offered to advance a single farthing. He was mounted on his mule, ready to start, when up came a little boy, who said, 'Here's twopence to buy a flute. Will you bring me one? Stooping down, and taking the money, the man said, 'You

shall play the flute. And sure enough, when he returned from the fair, of all the commissions entrusted to him, he only brought back the flute."

"Come, that's a good joke," said tia Maria; "I spend my days and nights in spinning—and for whom? Isn't it for you and for your children? Perhaps you'd like me to imitate the tailor who sewed for nothing and provided the thread into the bargain?"

At this moment Momo reappeared at the door of the kitchen. In person he was short and stout, with high shoulders, which he was continually shrugging in a contemptuous "what-does-it-matter-to-me" manner, until they nearly touched his enormous fan-shaped ears. His head was too large for his body, his hair short, his lips thick, and his nose flat. Moreover, he squinted horribly.

"Father," he said, maliciously, "there is a man in bed in Brother Gabriel's room."

"A man in my house!" cried Manuel, jumping up from his chair. "Dolores, what is the meaning of this?"

"Manuel, it is a poor sick creature. Your mother insisted on taking him in; I objected, but to no purpose. What could I do?"

"Well—well; but although she is my mother, she has no right to lodge strangers in my house."

"No; this poor man should have been allowed to die at the door like a dog," said the old woman, quietly; "don't you think so?"

"But, mother," remonstrated Manuel, "is my house a hospital?"

"No; but it's the house of a Christian; and if you had been here, you would have acted as I have."

"Not I. I should have put him on the ass and taken him to the village."

"You forget that the donkey wasn't here, nor was there anyone who could have taken care of the poor man."

"Suppose he should turn out to be a thief?"

"Dying men don't steal."

"If he should have a long illness, who will bear the expenses?"

"They've already killed a fowl for broth," put in Momo; "I saw the feathers in the yard."

"Have you lost your senses, mother?" cried Manuel, angrily.

"You've said quite enough," replied his mother, in a severe and dignified manner. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself for daring to quarrel with me for obeying God's command. If your father were alive, he wouldn't believe that a son of his could close

his doors on a poor, homeless, helpless, dying man."

Manuel hung his head, and there was a general silence.

"Well, mother," he said at length, "forget that I spoke, and do just as you please. Women are always right, and—always get their own way."

Dolores breathed more freely.

"How good he is!" she said, joyfully, to her mother-in-law.

"Could you ever doubt it?" she replied, smiling on her daughter-in-law, whom she loved very tenderly, and rising to take her place in the sick-room; "I who brought him into the world, never doubted it for a moment."

Passing by Momo, she added,—

"I always knew you had a bad heart, but to-day you have shown it more than ever. I pity you, for you are wicked; and wickedness brings its own punishment."

"Old women are good for nothing but preaching," growled Momo, looking askew at his grandmother. But the last word was hardly out of his mouth when his mother, overhearing him, darted forward and gave him a good box on the ear, saying,—

"That will teach you to be insolent to your father's mother,—to one who is doubly your mother."

Momo slunk off howling to the yard, where he gave vent to his rage by beating the dog.

CHAPTER III.

Tia Maria and Brother Gabriel vied with each other in taking care of the invalid, but they entirely disagreed as to the treatment by which his cure was to be effected. Tia Maria, without having studied Brown,* was all for good strong broths, stimulants, and tonics, because she considered Stein very weak and half-starved. Brother Gabriel, without having heard the name of Broussais,† prescribed emollients and cool, refresh-

* Dr. Brown was a celebrated physician at Edinburgh, in the last century. His remedies consisted chiefly of tonics and stimulants.

† Broussais, a celebrated French physician, and physiologist, author of 'L'Histoire de Plegmasies Chroniques,' and other works of great authority. He died in the year 1838.

ing draughts, because, in his opinion, Stein was suffering from brain fever; his blood being heated, and his skin burning.

Both were right; and from the combined effects of Maria's soups, and Gabriel's lemonade, it came to pass that Stein recovered his life and health on the very day that the good old woman killed her last fowl, and that the lay-brother gathered the last lemon from his lemon-tree.

"Brother Gabriel," said Maria, "what do you think our invalid is? Do you think he's a soldier?"

"He may be a soldier," replied the brother, who accustomed to look up to the old woman as a perfect oracle in all matters but those relating to physic and horticulture, invariably accepted her opinions, and mechanically repeated her words.

"No,—he can't be a soldier," continued Maria, shaking her head, "for if he were he

would carry arms about him, and he has none. When I folded up his coat and put it away, I only found a flute in his pocket; so he can't be a soldier."

"He can't be a soldier," echoed Gabriel.

"Suppose he were a smuggler?"

"He may be a smuggler," said the good monk.

"Well,—no," replied the old woman; "for to smuggle, one must have stuffs or jewels, and he has neither one nor the other."

"That's true; he can't be a smuggler," agreed Gabriel.

"Let's see what the titles of his books say. Perhaps we shall find out his business from them," proposed Maria.

The brother got up, took out his horn-framed spectacles, put them on his nose, and taking the parcel of books to the window, inspected them there for some time.

"Well, Brother Gabriel," asked the old

woman at last, "have you forgotten how to read?"

"No; but I don't understand these characters. I think they're Hebrew."

"Hebrew! Blessed Virgin! Suppose he should be a Jew!"

At this moment Stein, awaking from a long trance, opened his eyes and said in German, 'Gott! wo bin ich?' (God! where am I?)

The old woman sprang with one bound into the middle of the room. Gabriel dropped the books and stood as if petrified, with his eyes opened as wide as his spectacles.

"What language did he speak in?" asked Maria.

"It must have been Hebrew, like his books. Perhaps he is a Jew, as you suggested, tia Maria."

"God help us!" she cried; "but stay! if

he were a Jew, shouldn't we have seen his tail when we undressed him?"

"Tia Maria," ventured the lay-brother, "the Prior said that the story about Jews having tails was a foolish superstition, and that they had nothing of the kind."

"Brother Gabriel," replied the old woman very gravely, "since this blessed constitution everything is changed. This community that now governs instead of the king, wishes that nothing should remain as it used to be. That's why they won't allow Jews to wear tails now, though from the beginning of time they have had them, just like the devil. If the father prior says the contrary, it is because they force him to say so, just as they force him to say at mass "constitutional king."

"It may be so," said the monk.

"He's not a Jew though," continued Maria.

"More likely he is a Turk, or a Moor, shipwrecked on our coast."

"A Moorish pirate," replied the good brother. "Very likely."

"But then he would wear a turban and yellow slippers like the Moor I saw thirty years ago, when I was at Cadiz. He was called Seylan. How handsome he was! But his beauty went for nothing in my eyes, as he was not a Christian. Never mind, Jew, Turk, or Moor, we must do our best for him."

"Jew or Christian, we must help him," said Gabriel, and the two approached the bed. Stein was sitting up, looking about in astonishment at the objects which surrounded him.

"He won't understand what we say," said Maria, "but we may as well try him."

"We may as well try," repeated the monk.

The common people in Spain think that the best way to make themselves understood is to scream at the top of their voices. With this conviction Maria and Gabriel began shouting, both together; she: "Would you like some broth?" he: "Would you like some lemonade?"

Stein, whose ideas were gradually getting clearer, asked in Spanish, "Where am I? Who are you?"

"This gentleman," replied the old woman, "is Brother Gabriel; I am Tia Maria; and we are both very much at your service."

"Ah!" said Stein, "may they whose names you bear, the Holy Archangel and the Blessed Virgin, health of the sick, and consoler of the afflicted, bless and reward you for your goodness to me."

"He speaks Spanish!" cried Maria, joyfully, "and he's a Christian! and he knows

the litanies!!" And, unable to restrain her delight, she threw her arms round Stein and kissed him on the forehead.

"And now tell us who you are," she said, after making him take a cup of broth, "and what brought you, sick and almost dying, to this out-of-the-way place?"

"My name is Fritz Stein, and I am a surgeon. I served in the war at Navarra, and was returning by Estramadura, in order to find a port from which I could embark for Cadiz, and thence to Germany, which is my country. I lost my way, and, after wandering about for a long time, arrived here at last, worn out by fatigue, and almost at the point of death."

"You see," said Maria to Gabriel, "that his books are not written in Hebrew, but in the language of surgeons."

"Just so," replied the brother, repeating her words as usual.

"On which side were you?" inquired the old woman. "Were you for Don Carlos or —for the *others?*"

"I served with the Queen's troops," replied Stein.

Turning to her friend, with an expressive gesture, Maria said, in a low voice, "He was not with the good ones."

"He was not with the good ones," repeated Gabriel, sadly.

"But where am I?" again asked Stein.

"You are in a convent, and yet not a convent, for it is a body without a soul. Nothing is left but the walls, the white cross, and Brother Gabriel. *The others* carried off the rest. When there was nothing more to take, some gentlemen, who called themselves the '*credito publico*,' made inquiries for a respectable man to look after the monastery —or, rather, its carcass. They heard of my son, and we came and settled here; and I

live with him—the only son remaining to me. When we entered the monastery the fathers left it. Some went to America, others joined their missions in China; some returned to their families, and others had to earn their bread by labour, or by begging. We saw a monk, broken down by age and sorrow, sitting on the steps of the white cross weeping, as much for the brothers who were going away, as for the convent they were leaving. 'Are you not coming?' a young servitor asked him. 'Where should I go?' he replied. 'I have never left these walls, which have sheltered me ever since the good fathers received me into them, when I was a poor orphan-boy. I know no one in the world, nor anything, but how to look after the convent garden. Where shall I go? What shall I do? I can only live here.' 'Then stay with us,' I said; and my son added, 'Well

said, mother! What will do for seven will do for eight, and, as the saying goes, 'we shall eat more, and we shall eat less.'"

"And, thanks to their charity," said Brother Gabriel, "I am still here. I look after the garden, but since the big pump was sold I have been sorely put to it for water, and the orange and lemon trees are sadly dry."

"Brother Gabriel," continued the grandmother, "has never left these walls, which he clings to like the ivy; but, as I said, nothing remains but the walls. The barbarians! They acted on the principle, 'Destroy the nest, in order that the birds may not return.'"

"Nevertheless," said Stein, "I have heard that there are too many convents in Spain."

Tia Maria fixed her piercing black eyes

on the German; then turning to the monk, said in a low voice,—

"Could our first suspicions have been right?"

"It may be that they were right!" replied Brother Gabriel.

CHAPTER IV.

The end of October had been rainy, and November was clad in its thick green winter-mantle. Stein, whose recovery had been rapid, was one day walking about outside the monastery. A magnificent panorama extended before him; on the right was the boundless sea; on the left the endless plain. Between them, on the horizon, was traced the dark outline of Fort San Cristobal. The sea heaved gently, idly lifting its waves, gilded by the sunshine, like a queen whose golden mantle is moved by the passing air.

The convent, with its huge, severe, and angular lineaments, was in harmony with the

grave and uniform landscape; and its dark mass was the only point that broke the horizon of that immense panorama.

Not far off, situated on the banks of a river, as turbulent in winter as it was sluggish in summer, stood the village of Villamar. Its well-cultivated environs gave the idea, from a distance, of a chessboard, whose squares were coloured with the various shades of green. Here, the warm tint of the vine, still in leaf; there, the silvery gray of the olive, or the emerald-green of the wheat, which the October rains had caused to spring up, or the dark green of the fig-trees; and the whole was divided by fences of blue-green aloes. At the mouth of the river lay some fishermen's boats; on a hill near the monastery stood a chapel; in front of it was a large cross on a whitewashed stone pedestal; and behind it a piece of ground covered with smaller crosses painted black. This was the

cemetery—the Campo Santo. A lamp, which was always kept burning, hung on the white cross, so that the emblem of salvation served also, most appropriately, as a beacon to the sailors.

While Stein was admiring the view, Momo came out from the farmyard on his way to the village, and on seeing the doctor, asked him to join his walk; he agreed, and they started together.

The day was most beautiful, clear and brilliant as a diamond of the first water. The spirit of repose seemed to pervade all nature. One small white cloud alone appeared on the azure sky, resting motionless, like an Odalisque veiled in gauze, reposing on a deep blue ottoman.

They soon reached the top of the hill, on which stood the cross and the chapel; but although the ascent was short and easy, Stein was already fatigued, and obliged to

rest for a few moments. Then they entered the pretty cemetery, which, green and gay with flowers, seemed to smile at death. The crosses were entwined with beautiful convolvoluses, among which little birds fluttered about, singing "Sleep in peace."

The following inscription over the entrance alone told that this was the abode of death:—

"I believe in the remission of sins, in the resurrection of the body, and in the life everlasting.—Amen."

The chapel was a square building, of simple architecture; the only entrance was through a small door close to the altar. Over this there was a large oil-painting, representing one of the Falls of our Saviour with the Cross, so darkened by age that it was difficult to distinguish the figures.

Pious hands had decorated some of them with silver leaf: our Lord wore a crown of silver thorns, the Virgin a diadem of rays,

and the points of the cross were also edged with silver.

The walls of the chapel were covered with ex votos. Among these votive offerings was one which, from its strange appearance, particularly attracted Stein's attention.

The altar-table was not perfectly square from top to bottom, narrowing towards its foot in a curved line, so that there was a small space between its base and the wall against which it stood. In this dark recess Stein saw something resting against the wall, and after fixing his eyes upon it for some time, at length came to the conclusion that it was a blunderbuss. It was of such immense size, and apparently so heavy, that it was difficult to understand how a man could ever have handled it; an idea which often strikes us when looking at arms of the middle ages. Its muzzle was so wide that an orange could easily have been put into it. The weapon

was broken, but the pieces had been roughly tied together with cord.

"What does this mean, Momo?" asked Stein. "Is it really a blunderbuss?"

"I should say it had very much the look of one," replied Momo.

"But why should a murderous weapon be placed in this holy and peaceful spot? Truly one can't help feeling that it is as inappropriate as it would be to arm the Crucifix with a pair of pistols."

"Don't you see," replied Momo, "that the blunderbuss is not placed in the hands, but as an offering at the feet of our Lord. The same day that the weapon was brought here, ever so many years ago, this picture received the name of "Our Lord of Good Help."

"For what reason?" inquired Stein.

"Don Federico!" said Momo, staring at him in amazement, "why all the world knows the reason, and you don't!"

"You forget that I am a stranger," replied Stein.

"That's true. I'll tell you, then. A long time ago there lived a highwayman in these parts, who, not contented with robbing people, killed men like flies, either for fun, or because they didn't please him. One day, two brothers from this place had to make a journey. All the village turned out to see them off, praying for them that they mightn't meet the brigand, who spared no one, and was the terror of the whole neighbourhood. But they, like good Christians, recommended themselves to this Christ, and set out trusting in his protection. Entering an olive plantation, they found themselves face to face with the robber, who was coming towards them with his blunderbuss in his hand. He raised it to his shoulder, and took aim at them. In this terrible moment the brothers fell on their knees, calling on this

Christ, 'Help, Lord!' The brigand fired, but whose soul was it that started for the other world? It was his own! It pleased God to weaken the blunderbuss, so that it burst in his hands. And you see it there now, because in remembrance of this miraculous help, the brothers tied the broken pieces together and laid it here, and this shrine has ever since been distinguished as 'Our Lord of Good Help.'

"You really didn't know this, Don Federico?"

"No, Momo," he answered; adding, as if in reply to his own thoughts, "if you only knew how many things are not known by those who say they know everything!"

"We must go on. Are you coming, Don Federico?" said Momo, after a short pause. "You know I mustn't stay."

"I'm tired," replied Stein. "You go, and I'll wait here for you."

"God keep you!" and Momo went on his way, singing.

Stein's eyes fell on the quiet little village, inhabited by fishermen and sailors, who, however, could turn their hand to the plough as well as to the oar. It was not like German villages, a mere collection of thatched cottages and gardens, scattered about without order; nor like an English village, shaded by its fine old elm-trees; nor yet like a Flemish one, with its row of neat formal houses on each side of the road. Its streets were wide, but irregular, and badly paved. The houses of one story, but of various heights, and roofed with old tiles. Windows were rare, panes of glass still rarer, and ornament of any kind rarest of all. But it had a beautiful church, standing in a large square, which at that season of the year was green as a meadow, and the general effect was charmingly picturesque.

Fourteen crosses, similar to the one near which Stein was resting, were placed in a line at equal distances, the last being in the centre of the square, facing the church. This was the *Via Crucis*.

Momo returned, but not alone. His companion was an old man, tall, thin, and upright as a wax-taper. He wore a coat and trousers of coarse grey cloth, a waistcoat once resplendent with all the colours of the rainbow, now somewhat faded, and marvellously patched; a red sash like a peasant's, a broad-brimmed Catalan hat, on which was a cockade, once scarlet, but now changed by time, sun, and rain, into the colour of a carrot. On his shoulders were strips of tarnished gold lace, which had formerly served as fastenings to a pair of epaulets; an old-fashioned sword, slung on a sword-belt of the same age, completed this half-military, half-rustic costume. The scythe of Time had made sad

havoc with his hair, entirely depriving the anterior portion of his long, narrow skull of its natural ornament. To supply the deficiency, he had brushed forward the few locks that remained behind, and, fixing them on his forehead, by means of a black silk band, had achieved a topknot worthy of a Chinese Mandarin.

"Momo, who is this gentleman?" asked Stein, in a whisper.

"The commandant," he replied, simply.

"The commandant! Of what?"

"Of Fort St. Cristobal."

"Your most obedient," said the new comer, with a polite bow. "My name is Modesto Guerrero, and I place my useless services entirely at your disposal."

This customary compliment harmonized so exactly with the person who made it, that Stein couldn't help smiling, as he returned the commandant's military salute.

"I know who you are," continued Don Modesto, "and was sincerely sorry to hear of your misfortune and illness. I beg to congratulate you on your recovery, and on having fallen into the hands of the Alerzas, who are, indeed, excellent people. My house and my person are yours to command. I live in the Plaza de la Iglesia, or, I should say, de la Constitucion, for that is the present name. If you are inclined to favour me with a call some day, you will know the square by the inscription at the corner.

"Just as if there were so many squares in the village!" said Momo, grinning.

"There is an inscription, then?" asked Stein, who, in his rough camp life, had not had much opportunity of learning the language of even ordinary compliments, and was quite at a loss how to reply to those of the courteous Spaniard.

"Yes, señor," answered Don Modesto;

"the alcalde was bound to obey the orders he had received from high quarters. You will readily understand that in so small a village, it was not easy to procure a slab of marble with letters of gold like those in Cadiz or Seville—so they had recourse to the schoolmaster, who writes a most beautiful hand. In order to paint the inscription on the wall, he was obliged of course to be raised to a much higher position in the world than that which he usually occupies. Having prepared some black paint with soot and vinegar, he mounted his ladder, and set to work, tracing splendid letters at least a foot long. By ill-luck, in executing an elaborate flourish, he shook the ladder so violently that it fell to the ground, and the schoolmaster and his pot of blacking rolled in the gutter together. Rosita, my hostess, who witnessed the catastrophe from her window and saw the unfortunate man get up

from the ground, as black as charcoal, was so horribly frightened, that she had spasms for three days, at which I was not a little alarmed. The alcalde, however, ordered the poor bruised schoolmaster to complete his work, for he had only got as far as CONSTI—the poor man was compelled to obey very much against his will; but this time he would have nothing to do with the ladder; so they brought him a cart, placed a table in it, and made the whole safe with cords. He climbed up on to this improvised scaffolding, but was so nervous, remembering his accident, that his sole thought was, how to get his work done as quickly as possible. This accounts for the last letters being only an inch in length, instead of a foot, like the first; but that's not the worst part of the business—in his haste, he left an O at the bottom of his paint-pot, and so the inscription reads thus: PLAZA DE LA,

CONSTItucin. The alcalde flew into a violent rage, but the schoolmaster was firm, and declared, that neither for the alcalde nor for all the saints would he do it over again, for he would far rather mount an eight-year old bull than that acrobat's spring-board. So the inscription was left as it stood; happily, no one ever reads it; still it's a pity the schoolmaster didn't alter it, as it would have been so very beautiful, quite an honour to Villamar."

Momo, who was in a hurry to return with his well-filled saddle-bags, asked the commandant if he were bound for Fort St. Cristobal.

"Yes," replied Don Modesto; "and on my way there I am going to see Pedro Santalo's daughter, who is very ill."

"What! the Gaviota?" inquired Momo; "don't you believe a word of it. I saw her

yesterday on the top of a rock screaming like her fellow sea-gulls."

"Gaviota!" exclaimed Stein.

"It's a wicked nickname," said the commandant, "that Momo has given this poor girl."

"Because she has very long legs," replied Momo; "because she lives as much on the sea as on land, and because she sings and shrieks, and springs from rock to rock, just like a sea-gull."

"Your grandmother," said Don Modesto, "is very fond of her, and never calls her anything but Marisalada, on account of her graceful singing and dancing, and her pretty imitation of the songs of various birds."

"That isn't it," said Momo. "It's because her father is a fisherman, and she brings us salt and fish."

"Does she live near the port?" inquired

Stein, whose curiosity was aroused by these details.

"Very near," replied the commandant. "Pedro Santalo formerly owned a Catalan barque, which, on a voyage to Cadiz, was caught in a gale and wrecked on this coast. Every soul perished except Pedro, and his daughter who was with him. Anxiety to save her gave him double strength, and he managed to reach the shore with her. Utterly ruined, he hadn't the heart to return to his own country, so he built himself a little hut among the rocks here with the fragments of the vessel, and turned fisherman. He it was who supplied the Monastery with fish; the monks in return giving him bread, oil, and vinegar. For twelve years he has lived here at peace with all the world."

As he finished speaking, they reached the point where the road branched into two paths.

"We shall meet again soon," said the veteran as he left them; "I shall very shortly pay my respects to you and your hosts."

"Tell Gaviota," called out Momo, "that her illness doesn't frighten me. Ill weeds never die."

"Has the commandant been long at Villamar?" inquired Stein of Momo.

"Let's see . . . . . about a hundred and one years before the birth of my father."

"And who is this Rosita, his hostess?"

Momo made a grimace. "Seña Rosa Mistica! She is the schoolmistress! Such a charming creature! She's uglier than famine. She has one eye that looks east, and the other west. Her face has been so honeycombed by the smallpox that it's all over holes big enough to give back an echo! But

Don Federico, the sky is darkening, and the clouds are flying as though pursued by greyhounds. We must make haste home."

CHAPTER V.

Before continuing our story, it will be as well to say a few words about our new acquaintance. Don Modesto Guerrero was the son of an honest farmer, whose patents of nobility were written on as good parchment as many other folks. During the war of Independence they, as well as his house, were burnt by the French, on pretence that his sons were brigands, which simply meant that they had been guilty of the unpardonable crime of defending their country. The good man was able to rebuild his house; but as for the parchments, they had not the fate of the Phœnix.

It fell to Modesto's lot to serve in the army, and as his father was not rich enough to purchase a substitute, he entered an infantry regiment as a cadet.

His personal appearance was so strange, and he was such an easy-going fellow, that he soon became the butt of the regiment. His companions, encouraged by his long suffering, carried their jokes to such an extent that Modesto was at length obliged to put a stop to them in the following manner:

One day, at a grand review, he being in his usual place in rear of the line, one of his comrades very dexterously passed a noose round his leg, and tied the other end of the cord to the wheel of a gun-carriage, which stood near. The colonel gave the word "March!" The drums beat, and every man stepped off except Modesto, who remained at the halt, with one leg in the air like a sculptured zephyr about to take wing.

After the review, Modesto returned to the barracks as quietly and calmly as he had left them, and without change of tone or manner, demanded satisfaction from his comrades. No one of them, however, caring to take upon himself the responsibility of the practical joke, he informed them with perfect sang froid, that he should fight them all, one after the other. Then the culprit came forward; they fought, and the result was that Modesto's adversary lost one of his eyes. "If you would like to lose the other," said the victor, with his usual calmness, "I shall be ready to accommodate you at any time." Having neither relations nor friends at court, and being neither ambitious nor of an intriguing disposition, Modesto's career advanced at the pace of a tortoise, until the siege of Gaeta in 1805, when his regiment was ordered to join Napoleon's troops. Modesto there distinguished himself so much

by his courage and coolness that he gained a cross and the praises of his commanding officers. His name shone in the *Gazette* like a meteor, to be lost afterwards in eternal obscurity. Those laurels were the first and last that he gained in his military career; being severely wounded in the arm, he was unfitted for active service, and, as a reward, was appointed Commandant of the ruined Fort St. Cristobal.

It was now forty years since he had been in command of the skeleton of a castle, garrisoned by a countless army of lizards.

For some time our warrior could not submit quietly to this state of affairs. Every year he sent a memorial to government, begging for necessary repairs, and for the guns and troops, which were required for the defence of the Fort. No reply was ever vouchsafed him, though he never failed to suggest, at one time, the possibility of an

invasion by the English, at another, of Americans, of French, or of revolutionists, according to the state of the political horizon at the time being.

The same indifference was shown to his continued petitions that he might receive his pay.

The government persisted in ignoring the existence of these two ruins,—the fort and its commandant.

Don Modesto was of a patient nature, and so it ended by his calmly yielding to his destiny.

On his first coming to Villamar, he lodged with the widow of the late sacristan, who, with her daughter, then still young, led a life devoted to religion. They were excellent women, somewhat prudish and bigoted, but in the main thoroughly good, charitable, and remarkably tidy.

The villagers, who were all much attached

to the commandant, and at the same time knew his poverty, did all they could to assist him. There was never a pig killed without his receiving his share of the bacon and black-puddings. In harvest-time the farmers sent him wheat or peas, some adding oil and honey. The women made him presents from the produce of their poultry-yards, so that his saintly hostess had always a well-filled larder, thanks to the universal good feeling inspired by Don Modesto, who, with a spirit worthy of his name, far from being puffed up by all this kindness, was wont to say that Providence was everywhere, but that his head-quarters were at Villamar. And he showed how truly grateful he was, by being always ready to do a good turn to any one. He rose with the sun, and his first duty was to assist the Cura at early mass. Then, perhaps, he would have a commission to execute for one

neighbour; or a letter to write for another, whose son was a soldier; or to look after the children for a third, while she went about her household duties. He sat up with the sick, prayed with his hostess, and, in short, tried to make himself useful to everybody in any matter that did not affect his honour or integrity.

The sacristan's widow died, leaving her daughter Rosa alone in the world, with forty-five years of age well reckoned, and an ugliness that could be seen a mile off. This misfortune was chiefly owing to an attack of smallpox. The disease had fixed upon one of her eyes, especially affecting the eyelid, so that she could only partially raise it.

This peculiarity had a very odd effect, the half-closed eye giving a dull, vacant look to the whole face, forming a striking contrast to its fellow, which blazed like a bonfire at the least suspicion of anything approaching

to scandal or indecorum; and, in truth, opportunities offered themselves very frequently. After the funeral, the nine days of mourning being passed, the Señora Rosa said one day to Don Modesto: "I very much regret, Don Modesto, to be obliged to tell you that we must part."

"Part!" exclaimed the good man, opening his eyes wide with surprise, and pouring his chocolate over the tablecloth instead of into his cup; "and why, Rosita?"

Don Modesto had been accustomed for the last thirty years to call the daughter of his hostess by this diminutive.

"I should have thought," she replied gradually raising her eyebrows, "that you would not have needed to ask me why. You must be aware that it is not proper for two single people to live together under the same roof. It would furnish food for scandalous tongues."

"And what on earth could they say about you?" replied Don Modesto. "You, the model of the village?"

"One is never safe with them. What will you say when I tell you that *you*, notwithstanding your age and the uniform and cross you wear, and *I*, a poor girl who thinks of nothing but serving God, are already the laughing-stock of these unbridled tongues."

"What do you tell me, Rosita?" exclaimed Don Modesto, amazed.

"Precisely what you hear; and no one talks of us, excepting by the nicknames which those wicked acolytes have given us."

"I am astonished, Rosita; I can't believe—"

"So much the better for you, if you don't believe it," said the devotee; "but I declare to you that those impious wretches, God forgive them, when they see us going to Matins together, say, one to the other,

'Ring the bell for mass, for here come *Rosa Mistica* and *Tower of David*, in love and company as in the litanies.' They call you so because you are so tall and upright."

Don Modesto sat with his mouth open and his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Yes, señor," continued Rosa Mistica, "the neighbour who told me was perfectly scandalized, and advised me to complain to the Señor Cura. I replied that it was better to suffer and be silent. Many a holy martyr has suffered even more than I without complaining."

"For all that," said Don Modesto, "I don't mean to suffer that any one should make fun of me, and still less of you."

"It will be better," continued Rosa, "to show by our patience that we are good Christians, and by our indifference how little we care for the judgments of the world; besides, if you punish these evil speakers,

they will only say worse things, believe me, Don Modesto."

"You are right, as you always are, Rosita," said Don Modesto; "I know what these babblers are, if you cut out their tongues, they'd talk with their noses. But if in other days one of my comrades had dared to call me *Tower of David*, he would have had some reason to add *Ora pro nobis*. But is it possible that you, who are such a blessed saint, can really be annoyed by these calumnies?"

"You know, Don Modesto, there is a vulgar saying among those who think everybody as bad as themselves: 'between saint and saint*ess* there should be a strong wall.'"

"But between you and me, there is no need of a wall. I'm an old man, and never was in love but once in my life, and then it was with a very pretty girl, whom I should

have married, if I hadn't caught her flirting with the drum-major, who—"

"Don Modesto! Don Modesto!" cried Rosa, drawing herself up, "respect your name and my position, and be silent on your love affairs."

"I had no intention of shocking you," said Don Modesto in a contrite tone, "you know very well, and I can swear that I never have had, and never shall have a wrong thought."

"Don Modesto," replied Rosa Mistica, impatiently fixing upon him one eye full of fire, while the other made vain efforts to light up in unison, "do you think that I am simple enough to suppose that two God-fearing people, like you and I, could conduct themselves like fools who have neither shame nor dread of sin? But in this world it is not enough to do what is right, one must also guard against appearances."

"This is too much!" replied the commandant. "What appearances can there be between us? Remember that to excuse oneself is to accuse oneself."

"I tell you," said the devotee, "that accusers will not be wanting."

"What am I to do without you?" asked Don Modesto, mournfully; "left alone in the world, what would become of you without me?"

"He who feeds the little birds," said Rosa, solemnly, "will take care of those who put their trust in Him."

Don Modesto, quite upset and unable to see his way through his difficulties, had recourse to the cura, who was both his friend and Rosita's, and told him all that had passed. The priest persuaded the good woman that her scruples were exaggerated, and her alarm groundless; still more, that the proposed separation would increase, and

not prevent, disagreeable remarks. So they continued to live together in the peace and grace of God; the commandant always good and kind, Rosita always careful, attentive, and disinterested; for Don Modesto was not in a condition to remunerate her services with money; indeed so poor was he that he would have forgotten the very appearance of silver, had not the hilt of his dress-sword been made of that metal.

CHAPTER VI.

When Stein returned to the Convent he found the family sunning themselves in the court. Dolores, seated on a low stool, was mending one of her husband's shirts; her two daughters, Pepa and Paca, pretty little creatures, of six and eight years of age, were playing near their mother. The baby, rolled up in its leading-strings, was a source of great amusement to his brother, a little fellow about five years old, who was teaching it those droll little ways and tricks which tend to develop that precocity of intelligence so observable in Spain.

This boy was very handsome, but remarkably small, on which account Momo often

made him furious by calling him Francisco de Anis (aniseed) instead of Francisco de Asis, which was his real name. He wore a tiny pair of coarse, gray cloth trousers, and jacket to match, but both being much shrunk, and the former garment only partially fastened up by a single brace, made of a shred of selvage, his shirt protruded between them, in the form of a large pouch round his waist.

"Be an old woman, Manolillo," said Anis.

The little thing made a funny grimace, half-closing its eyes, pursing up its lips and nodding its head.

"Manolillo, kill a Moor?"

The child opened its eyes wide, knitted its brows, clenched its fists, and ended by getting red as a pomegranate, in its endeavours to put on a warlike appearance. Then Anis, taking hold of his hands, turned him round and round, singing a merry little song.

Tia Maria was spinning, and Brother Gabriel was making baskets with the dried leaves of the dwarf-palm.

Palomo, an enormous white woolly shepherd-dog, of the beautiful Estramadura breed, was asleep, stretched out at full length, occupying a considerable space with his great broad paws and well-furnished tail; while Morrongo, a sleek, well-fed, yellow cat, who in early life had been robbed of both its ears and its tail, slept upon a piece of old Maria's petticoat.

Stein, Momo, and Manuel arrived at the same time from different points. The latter, who among his other duties included that of gamekeeper, had been going his rounds over the farm, and appeared with his gun in one hand and three partridges and a couple of rabbits in the other.

The children flocked round Momo, who, opening his wallet, poured from it, as from a

cornucopia, a vast heap of all sorts of winter fruits, walnuts, chestnuts, pomegranates, yams, &c., with which in Spain a kind of feast is made on the eve of All Saints.

"If Marisalada brings us some fish to-morrow," said the eldest of the children, "what a good dinner we shall have!"

"To-morrow," replied her grandmother, "will be All Saints' Day, and Pedro will certainly not go out fishing."

"Then it must be the day after to-morrow."

"Still less will he fish on the Day of the Dead."

"Why not?" asked the child.

"Because it would profane a day consecrated by the Church to the souls of the blessed. As a proof, some fishermen once cast their nets on this day, and, when drawing them in, were both surprised and delighted at their weight; on landing them, however, they found them full of snakes

instead of fish. Isn't that true, Brother Gabriel?"

"No doubt! I didn't see it, but I am sure of it," replied the monk.

"And is this why you make us pray so much on the Day of the Dead?" asked the little girl.

"Yes," replied her grandmother; "it is a holy custom, and it is God's will that we shouldn't neglect it. As a proof, I will give you an example. There was once upon a time, a bishop who didn't show much favour to this pious practice, nor did he exhort faithful believers to practise it. One night he dreamt that he saw a wide abyss; on the brink was an angel, who, with a chain of red and white roses, drew out a beautiful woman, who was weeping, and appeared very unhappy.

"When she was drawn forth from the darkness the woman, covered with glory,

flew up to heaven. On the following day, the bishop was anxious to have an explanation of the dream, and begged God to enlighten him. He went to church, and the first thing he saw was a little boy kneeling, and saying his beads over his mother's grave."

"Certainly," said Manuel; "it is quite right to pray for the dead. I recollect once seeing a brother of the Congregation of Souls standing at the door of a chapel, with a plate in his hand, begging for them, and saying, 'Whoever will put a real into this plate will deliver a soul from purgatory.' A wag came up, put in the coin, and then said, 'Tell me, brother, do you believe that the soul is already out?' 'There can be no doubt of it,' replied the brother. 'Then I'll take back my money,' said the other; 'for that soul won't be such a fool as to go in again!'"

"You may be quite sure, Don Federico," said Maria, "that my son will always find something to say, appropriate or inappropriate; a story, or a jest, or a pun, on every subject."

At this moment Don Modesto entered the court, as stiff and grave as when he met Stein at the chapel, the only difference in his appearance being that he had now hanging from the end of his stick a large fish wrapped in cabbage-leaves.

"The commandant! the commandant!" was the joyful cry from all present.

"Do you come from your citadel of St. Cristobal?" asked Manuel, after the first greetings were over, and Don Modesto had seated himself on the stone bench by Stein. "You can join with my mother, who is such a good Christian, in praying to the saints to build up the walls of your fortress, the reverse of what Joshua did in respect of the walls of Jericho."

"I have more important things to pray for," replied Maria.

"Certainly," said Brother Gabriel. "Tia Maria has more important things to pray for than the rebuilding of the walls of the fort. It would be better to pray for the restoration of the monastery."

Hearing these words Don Modesto turned fiercely towards the monk, who at once retreated behind Maria, making himself so small that he almost entirely disappeared from view.

"So far as I can see," said the commandant, "Brother Gabriel does not belong to the Church Militant. Do you not remember that the Jews, before building their Temple, had conquered the promised land, sword in hand? Would there have been churches and priests in the Holy Land if the Crusaders had not first won it with the lance?"

"But why should tia Maria pray for impossibilities?" inquired Stein, hoping to

divert the commandant's attention from a subject which was raising his bile.

"That's of very little importance," replied Manuel; "old ladies don't trouble their heads on that score."

"One thing is certain," remarked Don Modesto. "I should be very grateful to any saint who would inspire the Government with the happy idea of restoring my fort."

"Of rebuilding, you should say," observed Manuel; "but take care you don't repent of your wish afterwards, as was the case with a devotee, who had a daughter so ugly, so silly, and so good-for-nothing, that she couldn't find any man desperate enough to marry her. The poor mother, grieved beyond measure, passed her days on her knees, in the church, praying to her blessed saint to send her daughter a husband. At length one came, to the poor woman's great joy, —which, however, didn't last long, for he

turned out such a bad character, and treated his wife and mother-in-law so cruelly, that the latter could bear it no longer, and, rushing to the church, she threw herself on her knees before the figure of the saint, exclaiming,—

> 'St. Christopher, listen to my complaint.
> As I'm a sinner, and you're a saint,
> Old clubfoot, muttonfist, hornyface! Faugh!
> You're as big a Jew as my son-in-law!'"

During this conversation Morrongo awoke from his long sleep, arched his back as high as a camel's, gave a great yawn, and began licking his whiskers. Then becoming aware of certain, to him, most pleasing emanations in the air, he approached Don Modesto with soft stealthy steps, until he was close to the odoriferous burden attached to his stick. But at this moment, a small pebble, thrown by Momo, with the dexterity peculiar to boys of that age, hit him on his velvety paw, and disturbed his plans. The cat made off at

a gallop, but returned very shortly, and again took up his post of observation, pretending to be asleep. Don Modesto saw through his manœuvre, and lost his peace of mind.

"You haven't told us, Señor Commandant," said tia Maria, "how you found Marisalada."

"Ill — very ill, tia Maria. She gets weaker every day. It goes to my heart to see the poor father's grief. This morning she was in a violent fever, would take no food, and coughed incessantly."

"What do you tell me?" exclaimed Maria, "Don Federico! Cannot you, who have performed so many wonderful cures, who have extracted a wen from Brother Gabriel and set Momo's eyes straight—cannot you do something for this poor creature?"

"I will do all I can to relieve her with the greatest pleasure," said Stein.

"And God will repay you; to-morrow

morning we will go and see her. To-day you are tired with your walk."

"I don't envy him the job," grunted Momo; "the proudest girl—"

"Not so," interrupted his grandmother. "She is a little wayward and intractable, but you must remember that she has been brought up alone, and allowed to have her own way by a father who is as soft-hearted as a dove, though a trifle rough in manner, like every good sailor and every good Catalan. But Momo can't endure Marisalada, because she called him *Romo* (snubnosed), which indeed he is."

At this moment a noise was heard; it was the commandant pursuing with gigantic strides the rogue of a cat, who had managed to elude the vigilance of its owner, and was running off with the fish.

"Ah! commandant!" cried Manuel, laughing, "the sardine which the cat steals

returns to the dish late or never. Here is a partridge in exchange—"

Don Modesto seized the bird, thanked the donor, and took his leave, anathematizing cats in general. While this was going on, Dolores was rocking her baby to sleep in her arms, singing,—

> "High up, on Sainted Calvary,
> Mid olive trees and rosemary,
> Four linnets, and a nightingale
> Christ's death upon the cross bewail."

It would be difficult for any one who catches the poetry of the lower orders in Spain, in its flight, as a child catches butterflies, to explain to those who wish to analyze it, why the linnets and nightingales lament the death of Christ; why the swallow snatches the thorns from His crown; why the rosemary is held in veneration from the belief that the Virgin dried the swaddling-clothes of the Child Jesus on a bush of it; why, or rather

how it is known, that the willow is of ill omen since Judas hanged himself on a bough of that tree; why no misfortune ever comes to a house which has been perfumed with rosemary on Christmas Eve; and why all the instruments of the Passion are found in the passionflower. In truth, there are no answers to these questions. The people do not possess, nor do they require any—they have imbibed these ideas like vague sounds of distant music, without seeking their origin, or investigating their authenticity. Some such thoughts as these were passing through Stein's mind, when Maria interrupted them by saying, "You haven't yet told us, Don Federico, how you liked our village."

"I only saw it from a distance," replied Stein. "I didn't walk further than the Chapel of Good Help."

"I never leave the monastery," said Brother Gabriel, "except on Fridays, when

I go to this chapel to pray to the Lord for a happy death."

"Ah!" Don Federico," said old Maria, "there is only one reason why I am not so happy here as I was in the village, and that is because I cannot follow up my devotions so well. My husband, your father, Manuel, who never was a soldier, and was a better Christian than you, thought as I do. He—blessed be his memory—was a member of the Rosario de la Aurora, a brotherhood who leave their houses after midnight to pray for the dead. Tired with the day's work, he slept heavily, but precisely at twelve o'clock a brother came to the door, ringing a bell, and singing,—

'Hark! 'neath thy window rings a little bell so clear;
It calls thee not, nor I—It is a voice more dear—
Thy father, and thy mother, from beneath the sod,
Call thee to follow me, and pray, for them, to God.'

"When your father heard this verse, he no longer felt fatigue, or any desire to sleep.

In the twinkling of an eye he rose and joined the brothers. Even now I seem to hear him singing as he went on his way."

The children, always fond of imitating their seniors example, commenced singing with their pretty voices, another verse of the Aurora :—

" If thou would'st wish to know, with what triumphal state,
Entered the King of Heav'n into Jerusalem,
He had no coach, nor gay *calesa* like the great,
He rode an ass's foal, a poor man lent to him."

"Don Federico," said Maria, after a few moments' silence, "is it true that in this world that God made, there are men who don't believe in Him?"

Stein was silent.

"Would that you could straighten the eyes of their understanding, as you have those in Momo's face," said the good old woman, sadly and thoughtfully.

CHAPTER VII.

On the following day, tia Maria set out for the cabin, accompanied by Stein and Momo, the latter acting as running footman to his grandmother, who was mounted on the philosophic *Golondrina*. That worthy animal, always gentle and docile, ambled along at an easy pace, with its head down and ears drooping, without one irregular movement, except when its nose came too near to a tempting thistle, its peculiar weakness. Arrived at their destination, Stein was surprised to find in the midst of a district so uniform and arid, a charming green spot—a perfect oasis in the desert.

Between two high rocks, the sea had formed a little creek, in the shape of a horseshoe, which, edged with fine sand, looked like a crystal plate upon a golden table. Here and there were rocks rising above the sand, like seats inviting repose on this tranquil shore. To one of these the fisherman's boat was moored, which, as it danced on the waves, pulled at its moorings, like an impatient horse at its halter. Opposite, on a large rock, stood the ruined Fort St. Cristobal, crowned with the branches of the wild fig-trees, like an old Druid with oak-leaves.

A little further on Stein came upon one of those sunken gardens, called in Andalusia "navazos," an object which both surprised and interested him. It was formed by the earth being dug out to a certain depth, and the bottom cultivated with great care. A thick belt of green reeds surrounded it, their

fibrous roots serving to hold the steep banks together, while the dense growth of their tall shoots screened the garden from the drifting sand. At this low level, though so close to the sea, and without any irrigation, the land produced abundant crops of well-flavoured vegetables, for the salt water, filtering through a large mass of sand, lost its bitterness, and reached the plants in a fit state to nourish them. The water-melons grown in these "navazos" are particularly good, and some attain such a size, that two of them are a load for a strong packhorse. The fisherman had built a hut with the remains of his ship, which the sea had cast up on the shore. The roof rested against the rock, so that it covered a series of steps formed in the rock by nature, and the habitation had, as it were, three stories. The first consisted of one high room, large enough to serve as parlour, kitchen, hen-

house, and, in the winter, as a stable for the donkey. The second story, which was reached by some steps cut by the pickaxe in the rock, contained two small bedrooms. In the dark and gloomy one to the left, adjoining the rock, slept Pedro; the right-hand one was occupied by his daughter, who enjoyed the exclusive privilege of a small window, that once belonged to the vessel, and which overlooked the creek.

The third story, to which a narrow passage, separating the two last-named rooms, led, was merely a dark and stifling garret. The roof which, as we have said, rested against the rock, was flat, and made of rushes, the external coating of which, decayed by the wet, had produced a forest of plants and flowers which in autumn, revived by the rain after the drought of summer, made the cabin appear roofed with a beautiful hanging garden.

On entering the hut, Maria found the fisherman sitting sad and downcast by the fireside, opposite his daughter, who, with her hair hanging in disorder on each side of her pale face, moody and shivering, was muffled up in a blanket of coarse grey flannel. She did not appear to be more than thirteen years old. As the new comers entered, she fixed on them her large wild black eyes, with a not very amiable expression, then turned away and huddled herself up again in the chimney-corner.

"'Tio Pedro," said old Maria, "you forget your friends, but they don't forget you. Will you be good enough to tell me what God gave you a tongue for? Couldn't you have come and told me that the child was ill? If you had told me sooner, I should have come sooner with this gentleman, who is a doctor, such as you don't meet every day, and who will cure your daughter in no time."

Pedro Santalo rose quickly, went up to Stein, tried to speak to him, but too much agitated to utter a word, stood silent, covering his face with his hands.

He was an oldish man, somewhat rough in appearance and of colossal size. His sunburnt face was surmounted with a thick mass of rough gray hair, and his chest, red as that of an Ohio Indian's, was similarly covered.

"Come, tio Pedro," said Maria, whose tears fell fast at sight of the poor father's despair. "A man like you as big as a church, and who could almost swallow little children whole, to give way like this! Bah! You are only made up for appearance, after all."

"Tia Maria," replied the fisherman, in a stifled voice, "this will be the fifth child I shall have buried."

"Señor! But why lose courage so?

Remember your namesake St. Pedro began to sink in the sea when he lost the faith which supported him. I tell you that with God's grace Don Federico will cure the child."

Pedro shook his head sadly.

"How obstinate these Catalans are!" exclaimed Maria, sharply, and passing in front of the fisherman she approached the invalid and added,—

"Come, Marisalada, come get up, child, and let this gentleman examine you."

Marisalada didn't move.

"Come, my child," repeated the good woman, "you'll see that he will cure you like magic." And, taking the girl's arm, she tried to induce her to rise.

"I don't wish to move," said the invalid, rudely shaking off Maria's hand.

"The daughter is as gentle as the father. Those who inherit don't steal," muttered

Momo, making his appearance at the door.

"When one is ill, one is impatient," said her father, trying to excuse her.

Marisalada had a violent fit of coughing. The fisherman wrung his hands with grief.

"A mere cold," said Maria. "Come, come, there's nothing out of the common in that; but still, friend Pedro, who would have thought of letting a child run about the rocks with bare feet and legs in such cold weather?"

"She would do it," replied Pedro.

"Why don't you give her wholesome food —good broth, milk, and eggs, instead of letting her eat nothing but fish?"

"She will eat nothing else," said the father, disconsolately.

"She'll die of bad management," observed Momo, who was leaning against the door-post with his arms crossed.

"Will you put your tongue into your pocket?" said his grandmother, sharply,—then turning to Stein, "Don Federico," she said, "try and examine our invalid as well as you can in her present position, for she'd sooner be killed than made to move."

Stein began by asking the father some details of her illness, then going up to the girl, who was in a sort of stupor, he soon perceived that her lungs were in a state of great irritation. The case was serious; there was great weakness from want of proper nourishment, a dry and hollow cough, and constant fever. In short, there was every reason to fear consumption.

"Is she as fond of singing as ever?" inquired the old woman during the examination.

"She'd sing although crucified, like the bats," said Momo, putting his head outside the door, so that the wind should carry his

soft words out of his grandmother's hearing

"The first thing to be done," said Stein, "is to prevent this young girl from exposing herself to the cold."

"Do you hear, my child?" said the afflicted father.

"It is essential that she should wear shoes and warm clothing," continued Stein.

"If she only would!" exclaimed the fisherman, jumping up and opening a cedar chest, from which he drew a number of articles of dress. "Here is everything she can want; all that I have, and all that I may earn, is for her. Maria! my daughter, say you will wear these clothes,—do, my Mariquilla, for Heaven's sake! You hear that the doctor orders it."

Marisalada roused by the noise her father was making, cast a fretful glance at Stein, and said sharply, "Who governs me?"

"I wouldn't undertake the job, except with the help of a good wild olive-stick," muttered Momo.

"She must have good food, and strengthening broths," continued Stein.

Maria made a gesture of approval.

"She should take milk, fowls, fresh eggs, and things of that sort."

"Didn't I tell you so?" interrupted the old grandmother, addressing Pedro. "This gentleman is the best doctor in the world."

"You mustn't let her sing," said Stein.

"Shall I never hear her again?" cried Pedro, sadly.

"What a dreadful misfortune!" replied Maria. "Only let us cure her, and then she may sing day and night, like the ticking of a watch. But I think I'd better take her home with me, for there's no one here to look after her properly, and no one who knows how to make good soup as I do."

"I know by experience," said Stein, smiling, "that my good nurse can make broth, fit for a king."

Grandmamma Maria was full of delight at this compliment.

"So now, tio Pedro, you have only to say the word, and I will take her home with me."

"And I remain without her? No, no; it can't be!"

"Tio Pedro, tio Pedro, that's not how we should love our children," replied Maria. "The way to love them is to consider their welfare before everything."

"Then so be it," answered the fisherman, rising suddenly. "Take her with you; I place her in your hands, and trust her to the care of this gentleman, and to the goodness of God."

Thus saying, he rushed out of the house, as if afraid that his resolution might falter, and began to saddle his ass.

"Don Federico," asked old Maria, when they were left alone with the girl, "isn't it true that, with God's help, you will be able to cure her?"

"So I hope," replied Stein. "I can't tell you how much this poor father interests me."

Maria made a bundle of the linen the fisherman had taken out of the chest, and when he returned with the donkey they lifted Marisalada into the saddle, the girl being too much exhausted by the fever to make any resistance.

As Maria was about to mount the faithful *Golondrina*, who seemed much pleased to return in the company of *Urca** (the name of Pedro's ass), the fisherman took her aside, and trying to slip some pieces of gold into her hand, said, "I saved this from the wreck; take it, and give it to the doctor.

* A species of whale.

All that I have belongs to him who will save my child's life."

"Keep your money," replied Maria, "and know that, in the first place, it was God who brought the doctor here, and in the second place—it was I." There was just the slightest touch of vanity in the way she uttered the last words.

As they went along, Momo, who was walking behind his grandmother's donkey, said,—"That's right, grandmother, fill the monastery with people, large as it is; don't stop at one or two, pray. So the cabin wasn't good enough for the Princess Gaviota?"

"Momo," replied Maria, "mind your own business, will you?"

"But what is this wild Sea-Gull to you, that you must needs burden yourself with her?"

"Momo, one proverb says, 'Who is thy sister? Thy next neighbour.' And another,

'Wipe the nose of your neighbour's son, and take him home.' The moral being, 'Do as you would be done by.'"

"But another proverb says, 'He's a fool who troubles himself about other people.' But never mind, you're determined to try and get the palm away from St. Juan de Dios."

"You won't be the good angel who'll help me," said Maria, sadly.

Dolores received the invalid with open arms, heartily approving of her mother-in-law's action.

Pedro Santalo, who had accompanied his daughter, took the charitable sick-nurse aside before leaving, and putting the pieces of gold into her hand, said,—"This is to cover all expenses, and that nothing may be wanting. As for your care of her, good Maria, God will repay you for it."

She hesitated a moment, and then took the money, saying,—"So let it be; she shall

want for nothing. Make yourself easy, tio Pedro. Your child is in good hands."

The poor father hurried away, never stopping till he reached the sea-shore, when, throwing himself on the beach, his face turned towards the convent, he wept bitterly.

When he left, Maria said to Momo: "Look sharp, and go to the village for me. Bring me a ham from Serrano's; he will be kind enough to send me a good one when he hears it's for a sick person; and at the same time, bring me a pound of sugar and an ounce of almonds."

"That's the way! Go on, let's have it altogether," cried Momo; "do you think they'll let me have all this on trust, or for the sake of my good looks?"

"Here's something to pay with," replied his grandmother, putting a piece of gold into his hand.

"Gold!" exclaimed Momo, stupefied, for it was the first time in his life that he had ever seen that metal in the shape of coin; "from what demon did you get this money?"

"What does that matter to you?" replied Maria; "don't interfere in other people's affairs. Make haste and be off. You ought to have been back by this time."

"Nothing was wanting but this," said Momo, "that I should turn servant to this accursed Gaviota,—to this waif of the sea-shore! I won't go."

"Come, boy, away with you at once."

"Not I. You'll have to drag me there if you want me to go," said Momo, in a decided tone.

"José," said Maria to the shepherd who was passing at the moment, "are you going to the village?"

"Yes, señora, what commands have you?"

The good woman gave him her commis-

sions, and added, "This Momo is a bad-hearted fellow, and won't go for me. I'm weak enough not to tell his father, who'd send him off in a hurry, with a coaxing that would break every bone in his body."

"Yes, yes, of course. Pray take every care of this crow, who will peck out your eyes," said Momo. "You'll see how she'll repay you. You'll see! Wait a bit!"

CHAPTER VIII.

During the following month Marisalada improved wonderfully in health, and did not show the smallest desire to return to her father.

Stein's strength was completely restored. Each day he became more and more attached to the good simple people among whom he dwelt, and his affectionate disposition, and modest retiring nature endeared him to them. His spirits were no longer depressed, his soul revived, and he became reconciled to life and to his fellow-creatures. One evening he was standing in an angle of the monastery, which faced

the sea, watching the grand effect of one of those storms which usher in winter.

A triple canopy of clouds was passing over his head, driven rapidly before the south-west wind. The lowest, in a dark heavy mass, resembled the old dome of a ruined cathedral toppling to its fall. When the mass burst, falling to the ground in rain, the second canopy was seen, above. Clouds lighter in colour, and less dense, racing with the wind, which, tearing them to pieces, disclosed through their apertures other clouds still higher and whiter, flying with the utmost speed, as if they feared to sully their pureness by contact with the rest. Every now and then bright rays of light, peeping through these apertures, fell suddenly, sometimes on the waves, sometimes on the plain, and then as quickly disappeared, and were replaced by the shadow of other gloomy clouds. These rapid alternations of light

and shade gave extraordinary animation to the landscape. Every living being had sought shelter from the fury of the elements, and not a sound was heard, save, in dismal concert, the moaning of the waves and the howling of the hurricane. The plants of the desert bowed their rugged heads to the violence of the wind, which, after lashing them, passed on till its deafening threats were lost in the distance. The sea, agitated, rose in enormous waves, which gradually lifted themselves on high, stood for an instant balanced, and then burst, roaring and foaming, as Goethe says, when, in his 'Torquato Tasso,' he compares them to anger in the breast of man. The spray broke with such force on the rocks of the Fort San Cristobal, that the dry golden leaves of the fig-trees were bespattered with flakes of white foam.

"Are you a cistern, Don Federico, that

you wish to catch all the water that falls from heaven?" asked José the shepherd. "Let's go in; roofs are made on purpose for nights such as these. My poor sheep would give something to get under shelter."

Entering the house, they found the Alerza family gathered round the fire. On the left of the hearth was Dolores, seated on a low chair, with her baby, who, standing on her knees, with its back turned to its mother, was leaning over the arm she held round it, as over the balustrade of a balcony, its little naked legs and arms in a state of perpetual motion, and crowing and laughing at its brother Anis, who, perched on the edge of an empty pipkin in front of the fire, sat as stiff and grave as a judge, fearing to lose his balance and be swallowed up in the pot, a fate which his mother had predicted.

Tia Maria was spinning on the right of

the chimney. Near her were her two little granddaughters, seated on stumps of dried aloes—and excellent seats they are—light, solid, and very safe.

Close to the fire were sleeping the large dog Palomo, and the grave cat Morrongo, tolerating each other from necessity, but mutually agreeing to keep at a respectful distance.

In the centre of the room was a low table, on which stood a lamp with four burners. Near to it sat Gabriel, making baskets of palm; Momo, mending Golondrina's harness; and Manuel, cutting up tobacco.

Simmering on the fire was a large saucepan filled with sweet potatoes, white wine, honey, cinnamon, and cloves, and the humble family was waiting impatiently till the perfumed "compota" should be cooked to a nicety.

"Come along, come along," said old

Maria, as Stein and the shepherd entered. "What can you be doing out of doors such weather as this? The hurricane roars as if it wanted to devour the whole world. Here, here, Don Federico, as close as possible to this inviting fire. Do you know that our invalid has supped like a princess, and is now sleeping like a queen? She's recovering at a fine rate, isn't she, Don Federico?"

"Her progress surpasses my hopes."

"My soups!" said tia Maria, triumphantly.

"And the asses' milk," ventured Gabriel, timidly.

"No doubt," said Stein, "and she should continue to take it."

"I don't object," said Maria; "for if it does no good it does no harm."

"Ah! how delightful it is here," said Stein, caressing the children. "If one could

only live for the present, without caring to trouble about the future!"

"Yes, yes, Don Federico," cried Manuel, merrily. "One half of life is the candle; the other half is bread and wine."

"And what need have you to think of the morrow?" asked Maria. "Is it right for the morrow to embitter the present day?"

"Man is a traveller," said Stein, "and must continue his journey."

"Certainly," answered Maria. "Man is a wayfarer; but when he reaches a place which pleases him, he should say, 'We shall do well here, pitch the tents.'"

"If you are going to waste the evening in talking about travelling," said Dolores, "we shall think that we have offended you, or that you are tired of staying here."

"Who would talk of voyages in the middle of December?" asked Manuel.

"Don't you see, señor, the large waves, and don't you hear the howling of the wind? Embark this weather, and the result would be the same as when you embarked in the war of Navarra."

"Besides," added Maria, "the invalid isn't quite cured yet."

"Mother," said Dolores, who was besieged by the children, "if you don't call these creatures away, the yams won't be cooked till the day of judgment."

The grandmother put her distaff away in a safe corner, and called the little ones.

"We won't come," they replied with one voice, "unless you will tell us a story."

"Come, then, and I'll tell you one," said the good old woman.

The children collected round her, Anis returned to his place on the pipkin, and she began as follows:—

MEDIO POLLITO.

(HALF CHICK.)

"There was once upon a time a pretty hen, who lived very comfortably in a farmyard, surrounded by a numerous family, one member of which was deformed and lame. The mother loved this poor son better than all her other children, as mothers always do in like cases; he was only half a fowl, and to look at him one would have thought that the sword of Solomon had executed on him the judgment that wise king pronounced on a certain occasion. He had but one eye, one wing, and one foot, but for all that, he had more vanity than his father, who was the most graceful, the boldest and the most gallant cock within twenty leagues. The cockerel believed himself to be the phœnix of his race. If the other cocks made fun of him, he thought it was from envy; if the

hens did the same, he said it was from anger, because he took so little notice of them.

"One day he said to his mother,—

"'Listen, mother, I'm sick of the country, I'm thinking of going to court; I wish to see the king and queen.'

"The poor mother trembled at these words. 'My son,' she exclaimed, 'who has put such folly into your head? Your father has never left his birthplace, and has always been an honour to his race. Where will you meet with such a poultry-yard? Where find a nobler dunghill. More wholesome and abundant food, or a family who will love you more?'

"'*Nego*' (I deny it), said Medio Pollito in Latin, for he could read and write, 'my brothers and cousins are ignorant and rustic.'

"'But my son,' replied the mother, 'have you never looked at yourself in the glass?

Don't you know that you have only one foot, and one eye?'

"'And whose fault is that but yours?' replied Medio Pollito, 'can you taunt me with it? It's certainly not my fault, and it may happen,' he continued, his comb turning scarlet, 'that I may meet a skilful surgeon who will supply me with the wanting members. However, it's no use talking, for go I will.'

"When the poor mother saw he was not to be diverted from his intention, she said, 'Listen, at least, my son, to the prudent counsels of a good mother. Be careful not to pass by any church where there is an image of St. Peter. The saint is not very fond of cocks, and still less of their crowing. Avoid also certain men there are in the world, called cooks, who are our mortal enemies, and twist our necks as quick as amen. And now, my son, go and beg your father's blessing, and

may St. Raphael, the protector of travellers, guide you on your way.'

"Medio Pollito went up to the respectable author of his days, bowed his head, to kiss his foot, and asked his blessing. The venerable cock gave it with more dignity than tenderness, for he didn't love him on account of his wayward disposition. His mother was so overcome with grief that she was forced to wipe away her tears with a dry leaf. Medio Pollito took his leave, flapped his wing, and crowed three times by way of announcing his departure.

"Arriving at the bank of a rivulet, which, as it was summer, was nearly dry, he saw that the little thread of water that remained was choked up by some branches. The rivulet perceiving the traveller, said to him,—

"'You see, my friend, how weak I am! I can hardly move an inch, nor have I strength enough to push away these trouble-

some boughs which block up my path. I cannot even make a turn to avoid them, it would fatigue me too much. You can easily help me out of my painful position by just separating them with your beak. In return, you may not only quench your thirst in my stream, but you may also reckon on my services when the rain from heaven shall have restored my strength.'

"The cockerel replied, 'I could, but I won't. Pray, do I look like a servant of dirty little rivulets?'

"'You will remember me when you least think,' murmured the rivulet in a weak voice.

"'Bravo! puddle!' said Medio Pollito, sneeringly; 'why you must have drawn a prize in the lottery. You think as much of yourself as if you had all the waters of the deluge!'

"A little further on, he came upon the wind, which lay nearly breathless on the ground.

"'Dear Medio Pollito,' it said, 'in this world we all need each other; come and look at me. Do you see what the summer-heat has done for me—me so strong and powerful, who can lift up the waves and ravage the plains, whose force nothing can resist? One of the dog-days has killed me—I fell asleep, intoxicated with the perfumes of the flowers I was playing with, and here I am powerless. If you would kindly raise me just two inches from the ground with your beak, and fan me with your wing, I should be sufficiently revived to fly away to my cavern, where my mother and my sisters, the whirlwinds, are employed in mending some old clouds that I have torn. There they would give me some soups, and I should gain fresh strength.'

"'Cavalier,' replied the malicious cock, 'you have many times amused yourself at my expense, pushing me from behind, and

opening my tail like a fan, in order that everybody who saw me might laugh at my appearance. No, my friend. Every pig has its Martinmas. So, farewell, Sir Joker.'

"So saying, he crowed three times very clearly, and strutting with vanity, continued his journey.

"In the middle of a stubble-field, to which the farmers had set fire, was a column of smoke. Going up to it Medio Pollito saw a tiny spark, which was gradually being extinguished among the ashes.

"'Beloved Medio Pollito,' said the spark, on seeing him, 'a happy chance has brought you here to save my life. For want of nourishment I am at the last gasp. I can't think what has become of my cousin, the wind, who is generally at hand to help me in these critical moments. Bring me a few straws to keep me alive.'

"'What do I care whether you live or

die?' said the cock. 'You are of no good to me in the world!'

"'Who knows if trouble may not come to you some day,' replied the spark. 'No one can say he will never drink of that cup.'

"'Hold your tongue,' said the perverse fowl; 'I'm tired of these complaints. Here, take this!'

"And with these words he covered the spark with ashes, then began to crow according to his custom, as if he had performed a great exploit.

"Medio Pollito arrived at the capital, passed in front of a church which they told him was dedicated to St. Peter, stopped at the entrance, and commenced crowing loudly, as much for the purpose of enraging the saint as for the pleasure of disobeying his mother. On arriving at the palace he wished to enter, in order to see the king and the queen, but the sentinels drove him

back. He then went round, and passed through a back door into a large room, where he saw a number of people coming in and going out. He asked who they were, and learnt that they were his majesty's cooks. Instead of running away, as his mother had entreated him, he strutted in with his crest and tail very erect, but a scullion laid hold of him and wrung his neck in the twinkling of an eye.

"'Now then,' he cried, 'come here, water, let's pluck this penitent.'

"'Oh! water! Oh! my dear Doña Cristalina!' cried the cock, 'be kind enough not to scald me! Have pity on me!'

"'Had you any on me, when I begged you to help me, you ill-natured creature?' replied the water, boiling with anger, and drenching him from his comb to his spurs, while the scullions took care not to leave a single feather on his body."

Paca, who was kneeling close to her grandmother, grew very red, and very sad.

"Then," continued Maria, "the cook took Medio Pollito, and put him on the spit.

"'Fire! brilliant fire!' cried the wretched creature, 'you, who are so powerful and so resplendent, pity my situation, repress your ardour, quench your flames—oh! do not burn me!'

"'Scoundrel!' replied the fire; 'how dare you ask me for pity, after having suffocated me, pretending you would never need my services! Wait a bit! One good turn deserves another!' And, indeed, not content with only roasting him, it burnt him till he was like a piece of charcoal."

When she heard this, Paca's eyes filled with tears. Maria continued:—

"The cook, seeing him in this state, took him by the foot, and threw him out of window.

"Then the wind caught him up.

"'Oh, wind!' whined Medio Pollito; 'my dear, venerable wind, — thou who reignest over all, owing obedience to none, mightiest of the mighty,—have compassion on me; let me drop gently on to this dunghill, and there leave me.'

"'Leave you!' roared the wind, whirling him in the air like a whipping-top; 'not while I have a breath left in me!'"

The tears which had collected in Paca's eyes now streamed down her cheeks.

"The wind," continued the grandmother, "deposited Medio Pollito on the top of a steeple. St. Peter stretched out his hand, and fixed him there firmly. He has remained there ever since,—black, lean, and featherless; lashed by the rain, and pushed about by the wind, from which he always turns away his tail. He is not now called Medio Pollito, but weathercock, for you

must know that he is there atoning for his faults and failings—his disobedience, his pride, and his wickedness."

"Grandmother," said Pepa, "do you see that Paca is crying for Medio Pollito? What you have told us is only a story, isn't it?"

"Of course," put in Momo, "none of it's true; but even if it had been so, wouldn't it be foolish to cry because a scoundrel got his deserts?"

"When I was at Cadiz thirty years ago," remarked Maria, "I was very much impressed by something I saw. I will tell you what it was, Momo; and will pray that it may be fixed in your memory as it has so long been in mine. It was a sentence written in letters of gold, over the door of the prison, and read thus—'Hate the crime, but pity the criminal.' It's like a sentence from the Gospel, isn't it, Don Federico?"

"The spirit is the same, though the words are not," replied Stein.

"But Paca has always tears in her eyes," said Momo.

"Is it wrong to cry?" asked the little girl of her grandmother.

"No, my child, on the contrary; the diadem of the Queen of the Angels is made of tears of compassion and repentance."

"Momo," said the shepherd, "if you say another word to vex my godchild, I'll wring your neck like the cook did Medio Pollito's."

"See what a good thing it is to have a godfather," said Momo to his little sister.

"It's not a bad thing sometimes to have a godchild," replied Paca, proudly.

"Indeed!" said the shepherd, "tell me why."

Then Paca ran to her godfather, who took her on his knee, kissing her affectionately.

Turning her little head towards him, her eyes fixed on his face, she began the following story :—

"Once upon a time, there was a poor man, so poor that he had not wherewith to clothe the eighth child, which the stork was about to bring him, nor to provide food for the seven he already had. One day he left his house, because it broke his heart to hear them crying and begging for bread. He walked on, not knowing where he was going; on, on through the whole day, till he found himself (where do you think, godfather?), well, then, at the mouth of a robber's cave.

"The captain came out—he was very fierce—and shouted to him in a voice like thunder, 'Who are you? What do you want?'

"'Señor," said the poor man, throwing himself on his knees before him, 'I am an

unhappy creature, who does no one any harm, and I have left my home that I may not hear my poor children crying for bread which I cannot give them.'

"The captain took pity on him, fed him, and gave him a purse full of money and a horse.

"'Go back,' he said, 'and when the stork brings you the other child, let me know, and I will be its godfather.'"

"Now we are coming to it," said the shepherd.

"Wait, wait!" cried Paca, "and you'll see what's coming.

"Then the man set out for his home, so joyful that his heart was ready to jump out of his mouth.

"'How happy my children will be!' said he.

"When he arrived, he found that the stork had already brought the eighth child, who

was in the bedroom with its mother. So he galloped back to the cave, told the bandit what had happened, and the latter promised to keep his word, and to come to the church that night. He did so, held the child at the font, and presented it with a bag full of gold. But the little one soon after died, and was taken to heaven. St. Peter, who was standing at the gate, told him to enter; but he replied, 'I will not enter, unless my godfather may come with me.'

"'And who is thy godfather?' asked the saint.

"'A captain of brigands,' replied the child.

"'Then, my son,' continued St. Peter, 'thou mayst enter, but thy godfather may not.'

"The child seated himself by the gate, very sad, leaning his head on his hand. The Virgin happened to pass by, and said to him,—

"'My son, why dost thou not enter?'

"He answered that he did not wish to go in without his godfather, and that St. Peter said that it was impossible he could enter. And the child threw himself on his knees, crossed his little hands, and cried so bitterly that the Virgin, who is the Mother of Pity, was touched by his sorrow. Putting a gold cup in his hand, she said,—

"'Go, seek thy godfather, and tell him to fill this cup with tears of contrition, and then he may enter heaven with thee. Take these silver wings and fly away.'

"The robber was lying asleep on a rock, with a gun in one hand, and a dagger in the other. On awaking, he saw, seated on a lavender-bush in front of him, a beautiful naked child, with silver wings, shining in the sun, and a golden cup in his hand.

"The bandit rubbed his eyes, thinking he was still dreaming, but the child said,—

"'No, don't fancy you are dreaming. I am your godson.' And he told him all that had occurred.

"Then the brigand's heart opened like a pomegranate, and the tears poured in torrents from his eyes. His grief was so acute, and his repentance so sincere, that they pierced his heart like two swords, and he died.

"Then the child took the cup full of tears, and flew with the soul of his godfather to heaven, where they entered, and where, please God, we may all enter.

"And now, godfather," concluded Paca, laying her little head on his shoulder, "you see what a good thing it is to have godchildren."

She had hardly finished her story, when a great noise was heard. The dog jumped up, pricked his ears, and stood on the defensive. The cat, with its hair bristled up,

and its eyes full of terror, prepared for flight, but shouts of laughter soon took the place of the alarm. It was only Anis, who, having dropped asleep during his sister's story, had lost his balance, and fulfilled his mother's prophecy, by tumbling backwards into the pipkin, in which the whole of his small person disappeared, with the exception of his feet and legs, which, sticking out, had very much the appearance of some new kind of plant growing in a flowerpot. His mother, with some little impatience, seized him with one hand by the collar of his waistcoat, dragged him from the abyss, and then, in spite of his resistance, held him for some time suspended in the air, where he looked like one of those puppets made of card-board, which move their arms and legs furiously, when the string by which they are held is jerked.

Now, as his mother was scolding him,

and everybody else laughing at him, Anis, who had a temper of his own, a failing which, they say, is common in children (though that doesn't mean that grown-up people are free from it), set up a howl of rage.

"Don't cry, Anis," said Paca. "Don't cry, and I'll give you two chestnuts that I've got in my pocket."

"Will you, though?" asked Anis.

Paca drew out the chestnuts, and gave them to him, and, instead of tears, two rows of white teeth were immediately seen glittering in the firelight.

"Brother Gabriel," said Maria, turning to him, "didn't you tell me that your eyes were very painful? Why do you work so much at night?"

"They did give me pain," replied Gabriel, "but Don Federico has cured them with one of his remedies."

"Don Federico may know a great many good remedies for the eyes, but he doesn't know one that never fails," said the shepherd.

"If you know it, will you kindly tell it me?" asked Stein.

"I can't tell you how to get at it. I only know that it exists."

"Who can procure it, then?" inquired Stein.

"The swallows, señor."

"The swallows?"

"Yes, señor. It is a herb called *pito-real*, but no one has ever seen it except these birds. When their little ones go blind, they rub their eyes with it, and their sight returns to them."

"The rubbish that José swallows, like a shark, without chewing it," said Manuel, laughing. "I'll tell you another thing, Don Federico, which he says, and which he

believes like an article of faith,—he says that adders never die."

"No more they do," said the shepherd. "When they see death coming, they slip out of their skins and wriggle away. In time they become serpents, and then, little by little, scales and wings grow on their bodies, they change into dragons, and fly off to the desert. But I've no patience with you, Manuel,—you believe nothing. Perhaps you would even like to deny the fact of the lizard being the enemy of woman, and friend of man? If you don't believe that, only ask old Miguel."

"Does he know it?"

"Certainly, from experience."

"What happened to him?" asked Stein.

"Once when he was lying asleep in the fields," replied José, "a snake crawled near to him; but a large lizard who happened to be in the grass, at once came forward to protect Miguel, and fought with the snake.

Still Miguel didn't awake, whereupon the lizard crammed the end of his tail into his nose; this roused him, and seeing the snake, he set off running as fast as his legs could carry him. The lizard is a good little beast, with excellent feelings,—it never goes to sleep at sunset without first coming down the wall, in order to kiss the earth."

When the conversation began about the swallows, Paca said to Anis, who, seated crosslegged among his sisters, looked like the Grand Turk in miniature,—"Anis, do you know what the swallows say?"

"Not I;—they've never spoken to me."

"Well then, they say,"—and the little girl imitating the chirping of the swallows, began singing quickly,—

'Tis pleasant to eat and to drink,
To borrow as much as you may,
And then, if they foolishly think
To seize you because you don't pay,
To fly, fly, fly far away,
Gossip Beatrix, out of the way.'"

"That's why they go away, is it?" asked Anis.

"Of course," boldly asserted his sister.

"And the sparrows,—what do they do?" asked Anis.

"The sparrows? Oh! they do nothing but eat and steal."

While all this was going on, Dolores, carrying her sleeping baby with one hand, had laid the table, served up the yams, and helped every one equally. The little ones were eating from her plate; and, noticing that she didn't touch a morsel of the good things she had so carefully prepared, Stein said to her, "Won't you eat anything, Dolores?"

"Don't you know the saying," she replied, smiling,—"'He who has children by his side will never die of indigestion.' What they eat fattens me."

Momo who sat next this group drew back

his plate, for fear his brothers should be tempted to ask him for some of its contents. His father, observing this, said to him,—"Never be greedy, for greediness is a disgusting vice; and never be avaricious, for avarice is a low vice. One day a miser fell into a river. A countryman, who saw that the stream was carrying him away, held out his hand to him, saying, 'Give me your hand.' *Give!*—a miser give! Sooner than give anything he let the stream carry him down. By chance he drifted past a fisherman, who called to him, 'Here, *take* my hand.' The question being now of taking, our friend was only too willing, and he was saved from being drowned."

"A joking story like this isn't the sort you should tell your son, Manuel," said tia Maria. "You might have told him of the wicked rich man who refused a poor beggar even a crust of bread or a cup of water.

'God grant,' said the latter, 'that everything you touch may turn into the gold and silver you love so much.' His prayer was heard. Everything in the miser's house turned into those metals, and became as hard as his own heart. Tormented by hunger and thirst, he went out into the fields, and seeing a spring of water as clear and pure as crystal, ran up eagerly to it, but as soon as his lips touched the water it was turned into silver. In the same way, when he plucked an orange from the tree, it turned to gold in his hand. So he died raving mad, cursing that which he had once loved so much."

Manuel, the strong-minded one of the party, shook his head.

"You see, tia Maria," said José, "Manuel won't believe anything. He doesn't believe that you would find coal under the ground if you were to dig on the tenth of August, the day St. Lawrence was burnt on a gridiron."

"When the day comes round again," said Manuel, "I'll dig a hole before you, José, and then we'll see whether there will be any."

"And what would it prove even if no coal were to be found?" asked his mother. Perhaps you think that you will find it if you look for it without believing? You think, Manuel, that only the articles of religion should be believed, and that credulity is a sign of a weak mind; but instead of that, my son, it's a sign of a healthy one."

"Still, mother," replied Manuel, "there's a medium between running and standing still."

"But why wish to limit your faith?" returned the good old woman; "faith is the first of all the virtues. What should you think, son of my heart, if I were to say to you, 'I have brought you into the world;

I have reared you; I have guided your first footsteps; my obligation towards you is therefore fulfilled?'—that is to say, if you look upon a mother's love only as a matter of obligation? What should you say, I repeat?"

"I should say that you were not a good mother."

"Well then, my son, apply that to what we were talking about. He whose faith is the faith of *obligation*, and who only believes just enough not to be a renegade, is a bad Christian,—as I should be a bad mother if I only loved you as far as I was bound in duty."

"Brother Gabriel," asked Dolores, "why don't you taste my yams?"

"It is a fast-day with our order," replied the monk.

"Oh! nonsense! convents and fast-days are done away with now," said Manuel,

cavalierly, in order to persuade the poor old man to join in the general feasting; "besides, you're past sixty—so away with scruples! You won't be lost for eating a few yams!"

"Pardon me," said the monk, "but I must fast as heretofore, since the father prior hasn't given me dispensation."

"Well said, Brother Gabriel," put in Maria; "Manuel, don't you be a tempting demon, trying to inspire rebellion and gluttony." So saying, the good old woman rose, and locked up in a cupboard the plate which Dolores had put before the monk, saying, "This shall be kept for you here till to-morrow morning, Brother Gabriel."

When supper was ended, the men who always keep their hats on indoors took them off, and Maria said grace.

CHAPTER IX.

NATURE seemed to reward Stein's judicious treatment and Maria's charitable care, for Marisalada was now quite convalescent; she was dressed decently, and her hair, well brushed and gathered up into a "castaña,"* did credit to Dolores, who had undertaken to arrange her headdress.

One day, when Stein was reading in his bedroom, which overlooked the great court where the children were playing with Marisalada, he heard the latter imitate the songs of different birds to such perfection

* That is, into the form of a chestnut, according to the Andalusian fashion among the peasantry.

that he left off reading to listen, with admiration, to her extraordinary skill. Soon after, the children began one of those games so common in Spain, in which the dialogue is sung as well as spoken.

Marisalada undertook the part of mother, Pepa, that of a young cavalier who had come to ask the hand of her daughter in marriage. The mother refused it; the cavalier wished to run off with his lady-love, &c.: all the dialogue being sung in couplets to a tune of the most beautiful melody. The book fell from Stein's hands, for like every true German, he was passionately fond of music. Never had he heard such a charming voice. It was pure and clear as crystal, soft and flexible as silk. He hardly dared to breathe, fearing to lose a single note. "You are all ears, I see," said tia Maria, who had entered the room unknown to Stein. "Didn't I tell you that she was

a canary-bird at liberty?" And going down to the court, she asked Marisalada to sing a song. The girl refused with her usual sourness.

At this moment Momo made his appearance, stained with dirt, driving before him Golondrina, laden with charcoal. His face and hands were smutty and black as ink.

"King Melchor!" cried Marisalada on seeing him, and "King Melchor, King Melchor!" repeated the children. "If I had nothing else to do," replied Momo in a rage, "but to sing and amuse myself like you, Madam Idler, I shouldn't be covered with dirt from head to foot. Luckily Don Federico has forbidden you to sing, and so there's a chance of my ears being spared."

Marisalada's reply was to begin singing with all her might and main.

She had scarcely finished, when Stein,

who had an excellent ear, took up his flute, and repeated note for note the "bolero" she had sung.

It was now the young girl's turn to be struck with astonishment; moving her head in every direction, she tried to discover whence came this perfect echo. "It isn't an echo," cried all the children, "it's Don Federico blowing into a reed, with holes bored in it."

Marisalada went quickly to Stein's room, and stood there listening to him with the greatest attention, her body leaning forward, a smile on her lips, and her whole soul in her eyes. From that moment the wild roughness of the fisherman's daughter was changed, so far as Stein was concerned, into something like confidence and docility, which greatly astonished the whole family.

Full of joy, tia Maria begged Stein to take advantage of the influence he had gained

over the girl, by persuading her to be taught to employ her time profitably, in learning God's will, and in striving to become a good Christian, a sensible and reasonable woman, and a good housekeeper. She added, that in order to tame Marisalada's wild disposition, and to improve her unpolished manners, the best thing they could do would be to beg Rosita the schoolmistress to take charge of her, because she was a decent Godfearing woman, and very handy with her needle.

Stein thoroughly approved of this idea, and obtained Marisalada's consent, promising her in return, that he would see her every day, and play the flute to amuse her. The young girl's natural taste for music awoke in her a great desire to study it, and Stein's skill gave her the first impulse.

When Momo heard that Marisalada was to become Rosa Mistica's pupil, to learn how to sew, and sweep, and cook, and, above all,

as he said, how to be sensible, and that it was the doctor who had brought it to pass, he declared that now he believed the story Don Federico had told him of there being men in his country who by whistling could make all the rats in the place run after them.

Since the death of her mother, the Señorita Rosa had set up a girls' school. It is called *school** in the villages, but in the towns it assumes the name of academy. The village-girls go to school from morning till noon, and learn nothing but Christianity and stitching. In the towns they are taught reading, writing, embroidery, and drawing. No doubt, these schools cannot make profound scholars, nor become seed-beds of art, nor produce models of an education equal to that of the *emancipated woman*; but on the other hand, they turn out good workwomen

* Amiga.

and excellent mothers of families, which is somewhat better.

When Marisalada had quite recovered, Stein begged her father to entrust her for a time to the care of the good woman, who would try and replace the mother she had lost, and teach her the duties of her sex.

When the Seña Rosa was asked to admit into her house the untamed daughter of the fisherman, her first reply was a decided "No," after the manner, in such cases, of people of her temper. However, she ended by yielding, when they made her understand the good that might result from this act of charity, as in similar circumstances do all really religious people, for with them duty is not a conventionality, but a straight line drawn by a firm hand.

No one could tell how much the unhappy schoolmistress endured during the time Marisalada was under her charge. On one

side were endless mimicries and rebellious outbreaks; on the other, profitless sermons and fruitless exhortations.

Two events exhausted Rosa's patience the more readily, inasmuch as with her, that virtue was not innate, but laboriously acquired.

Marisalada had succeeded in organizing a sort of mutiny in the little battalion commanded by Rosita. This rebellion, at first timid and vacillating, but gaining strength as it proceeded, broke out one morning in the following manner:—

"I can't bear *single* roses," Marisalada suddenly exclaimed.

"Silence!" cried the mistress, whose severe discipline did not permit that a word should be spoken during school-time.

Silence was restored.

Five minutes after a sharp, and somewhat insolent voice, was heard—

"I can't bear *full-blown* roses."

"Nobody asked your opinion," said Seña Rosa, thinking that this unseasonable observation had been provoked by Marisalada.

Five minutes again passed, then one of the conspirators, stooping to pick up her thimble, said,—

"I can't bear *white* roses."

"What does this mean?" then cried Rosa Mistica, her black eye blazing like a torch. "Are you making fun of me?"

"I can't bear '*pitimini*' roses," said one of the smallest girls, immediately hiding herself under the table.

"Nor I *passion* roses."

"Nor I *yellow* roses," cried the others, and overpowering all was heard, in Marisalada's clear, strong voice,—

"No one can endure *withered* roses."

"Withered roses, withered roses, no one

can endure them," cried all the conspirators in chorus.

Rosa Mistica, at first, was simply astounded, but this last piece of insolence roused her; she rushed into the kitchen, and returned armed with a broom. At this, all the children took flight like a flock of birds. Rosa remained alone, and letting her broom fall to the ground, she crossed her arms, and becoming more composed, exclaimed, "Give me patience, good Lord! I have endeavoured to bear my nickname with resignation, but doubtless this crown of thorns was necessary for me. Thy will be done." Perhaps she might have forgiven Marisalada on this occasion, had she not soon after committed another offence, which decided Rosa on sending her away at once.

Ramon Perez, the barber's son, who was much addicted to playing the guitar, came every night, thrumming on his instru-

ment, and singing love-songs under the severely-closed windows of the devotee.

"Don Modesto," she said one day to her lodger, "next time you hear that night-bird Ramon, excruciating our ears with his songs, will you do me the favour to go out and tell him to take himself and his music elsewhere?"

"But Rosita," replied Don Modesto, "do you wish me to fall out with this boy, when his father (God reward him!) has shaved me gratis ever since I came to Villamar? And do you know I really like his music; no one can deny his talent for the guitar."

"Much good may it do you," said Rosa, coldly. "Possibly your ears are bomb-proof; but though you like it, I don't; neither do I think it seemly for him to come and sing under the windows of a single woman."

In Don Modesto's face could be read a

mute reply, divided into three parts. First, astonishment, which seemed to say, "What! Ramon make love to my hostess!" then doubt, "Is it possible?" lastly, certainty. "It must be so. Ramon is an audacious fellow!"

After a moment's thought, Seña Rosa continued,—"You might catch cold going from your warm bed into the cold night-air, so you'd better not get up, and I'll tell this eternal chatterer myself, that if he wants to amuse himself he had better buy a monkey."

Precisely at midnight the tinkling of a guitar was heard, and a voice singing,—

"Ah! lovelier is thy cheek's warm brown,
My own brunette, than all the chilly,
Pale beauty of the blooms that crown,
The queen of flow'rs—the fair white lily."

"What foolery!" exclaimed Rosa Mistica, rising from her bed; "for how many idle words he will have to give account!"

The voice continued,—

"Maiden, as you kneel at mass,
The church reflects your radiance,
And where you tread, the withered grass
Springs fresh in green luxuriance."

"The saints help us!" exclaimed Rosa, putting on her third petticoat. "He actually introduces the church into his profane verses, and all who hear him, knowing my devotion to religion, will suppose that he does this to insult me. Does this beardless chin-scraper fancy he can laugh at me? That was all that was wanting!"

Rosa entered the sitting-room, and, to her horror and dismay, saw Marisalada leaning against the window, listening to the singer with the greatest attention. Crossing herself, she exclaimed, "And she isn't yet thirteen! Truly, there are no children now-a-days!"

She took hold of Marisalada by the arm

and drew her away from the window, placing herself there instead, just as Ramon screamed out the following verse:—

"One moment at thy window show
Those eyes so beautiful and bright,
To lighten us, for here below,
The street is dark, and dark the night."

After this, the air was thrummed on the guitar with more vehemence and ardour than ever.

"I'll light you up with a vengeance," screamed Rosa in a fury, "you libertine, you profaner, you sempiternal and most unbearable screech-owl!"

Ramon Perez, as soon as he could recover from his first surprise, took to his heels with the speed of a deer, never once looking behind him. This was the finishing stroke, Marisalada was dismissed from the school, notwithstanding Don Modesto's timid pleadings in her favour.

"Señor," replied Rosa to her friend, "the

proverb says, 'Burdens are burdens,' and while this shameless girl is under my charge, I am answerable for her actions to God and to man. It's quite sufficient to answer for one's own sins, without being burdened with those of others. Besides, as you know, it is impossible to put this creature into the straight path, for the more you wish her to go to the right, the more she inclines to the left."

CHAPTER X.

It was now three years since Stein's arrival at this quiet village. He had adopted the habits of the country, and lived, as the French say, "au jour le jour;" in other words, according to old Maria's advice, that we shouldn't allow too much care for the future to interfere with the enjoyment of the present.

During this time the young doctor had corresponded with his family. His parents had died while he was serving with the army in Navarra; his sister Charlotte had married a rich farmer, under whose teaching her two younger brothers had turned

out skilful and hardworking, if not very experienced agriculturalists. So Stein felt himself at liberty to act as he pleased. He had devoted himself to the education of; the young invalid, who owed him her life, and, although the soil that he cultivated was barren and ungrateful, he had by dint of great patience, succeeded so far that the first seeds of education had taken root in it. But that which far surpassed his hopes, was the success he met with, in developing the really extraordinary talent for music with which nature had endowed the fisherman's daughter. Her voice was matchless, and Stein, who was a good musician, trained it with the same care, as the branches of the vine are trained, which are at once flexible and vigorous, soft and strong.

But the master had a soft and tender heart, and a nature so trusting as to be almost blind.

He fell in love with his pupil, and this feeling was strengthened by the deep love her father bore her, and by Maria's admiration of her, both of which could not fail to exercise a strong influence over a nature as frank, loving and gentle, as that of the young German. So that he believed, with Pedro Santalo, that Marisalada was an angel, and with Maria, that she was a prodigy.

Stein was one of those men, who can attend a masked ball without realizing the fact that under the painted pasteboard masks, there are other and very different features. And if passionate affection blinded Santalo, and extreme goodness of heart blinded Maria, the two combined to tie a bandage over Stein's eyes.

But it was Marisalada's pure, eloquent, expressive voice that most enthralled him. He persuaded himself that to express such

depth of feeling in her song, she must have a deeply feeling heart. As the grain of wheat, in a fertile soil, swells and takes root, before its shoots appear above ground, so did this peaceful, sincere love grow and root itself in Stein's heart, a love felt before defined.

Marisalada also was attached to Stein, not because she was grateful for his services, or that she appreciated his excellent qualities, or could understand his great superiority of mind, nor even because she felt the vague attraction inspired by being loved; the gratitude, admiration, and attraction which she felt, were inspired by the *musician*, the master who instructed her in her favourite art. Besides, the isolation in which she lived, prevented her from having a preference for any one else. Don Modesto's age was rather against his taking part in the tournament of love. Momo,

besides his extreme ugliness, retained all his hatred for Marisalada,—Gaviota, as he still called her,—and in her turn, she treated him with the greatest contempt. True, village beaux were not wanting, beginning with the barber, who still perseveringly sighed for the girl, but no one of them could compete with Stein.

This tranquil state of affairs had lasted through three summers and three winters, which had passed away like three days and three nights, when what we are about to relate took place.

Intrigue (who would have thought it?) was at work in quiet Villamar; the chief conspirator (who would have believed it?) was tia Maria; the confidant (who would not be astonished?) was Don Modesto.

Though it may be indiscretion, or, worse still, meanness, to play the eavesdropper, we will nevertheless hide ourselves in the

garden, behind this large orange-tree, whose trunk, though its flowers are withered and its leaves fallen, is still firm, like resignation which remains in the depths of the soul, when joys are faded and hopes are dead. Here, then, we will conceal ourselves, and listen to the conversation which the two accomplices are holding in secret, while Brother Gabriel, a thousand leagues off in spirit, is close to them, tying up his lettuces, that they may come to table white and tender.

"It's not only my imagination, Don Modesto," said Maria, "it's a reality; and one would be blind not to see it. Don Federico loves Marisalada, who in return doesn't look upon him as a bag of straw."

"Tia Maria, who thinks of love?" replied Don Modesto, who had never realized, in his calm, tranquil life, the eternal, classical, and invariable axiom of the in-

separable alliance of Mars and Cupid. "Who thinks of love?" repeated Don Modesto, in the same tone as if he had asked, "Who thinks of playing at billiards?"

"The young people, Don Modesto, the young people; and if they didn't, the world would soon come to an end. But here's the case: we must give a touch of the spur to these two—they're getting on a great deal too slowly. Our good friend has been in love with his nightingale, as he calls her, these two years; any one with half an eye could see that. You, who are an important personage, and so much esteemed by Don Federico, ought to exert yourself a little in this matter, and give him good advice, both for their advantage and for ours."

"I must beg to be excused, tia Maria," replied Don Modesto. "Ramon Perez is an obstacle; he is a friend of mine, and I

don't wish to do him a bad turn. He shaves me for nothing, and to exert myself against his interest would be an ill-natured act on my part. He is much grieved because Marisalada doesn't like him, and I am shocked to see how thin and yellow he has become. He told me the other day, that if he didn't marry the girl, he should break his guitar; and that as he couldn't turn monk, he would turn rebel. You see, tia Maria, that I should compromise myself in every way, by interfering in this affair."

"Bah!" exclaimed the old woman, impatiently. "Do you take a lover's words for gospel? Ramon Perez, poor creature, isn't man enough to kill a sparrow, and you believe he's going to kill Christians! And then only consider, if Don Federico marries Marisalada, he will always remain here, and what happiness that will afford us all! I assure you it makes my flesh creep to hear

him talk of going away. And the child! What a happy fate for her! For I must tell you that the good doctor is making money very fast. The Alcalde Don Perfecto gave him a hundred reals, which shone like a hundred stars, for attending and curing his son. Ah! what a charming couple they will make, my commandant!"

"I don't dispute your word, tia Maria," replied Don Modesto, "but don't force me to take part in this affair; let me observe a strict neutrality. I haven't two faces; I have the one that Ramon shaves, and no other."

At this moment Marisalada entered the garden. Certainly, she was not at all like the dishevelled, untidy young girl we formerly knew. Every morning she came to the monastery with her hair carefully arranged, and her dress clean and tidy. Neither affection nor gratitude for its in-

mates brought her there: it was solely to indulge her pleasure of hearing Stein play, and of receiving music lessons from him. Besides, she was glad to escape from the dull cabin, where she had no other companion than her father, who did not amuse her.

"Where's Don Federico?" she asked, on entering.

"He hasn't yet returned from visiting his patients," replied Maria. "He has to vaccinate a dozen children to-day. What a funny thing it is, Don Modesto! He gets something he calls '*vaccine*' from the cows, which is a counter-poison to the smallpox. And it must be true, because Don Federico says so."

"Nothing is more true," replied Don Modesto. "A Swiss first discovered it. When I was at Gaeta I met the Swiss of the Pope's Guard, but no one of them told me that he was the inventor."

"If I had been his Holiness," pursued Maria, "I should have granted a plenary indulgence to the inventor. Sit down, my Saladilla. I have been longing to see you."

"No," said Marisalda; "I shall go."

"Where can you go where you are more loved?" asked tia Maria.

"What do I care about people loving me?" replied the girl. "What's the use of staying if Don Federico isn't here?"

"That's it, is it? So you only come to see Don Federico, you little ungrateful thing!"

"Why not? What else should I come for? To spend my time with Romo, whose eyes, face, and soul are all crooked?"

"Then you're very fond of Don Federico?" ventured the old woman.

"I like him," answered Marisalada. "If it were not for him I should never set foot

here, for fear of meeting that imp Romo, whose tongue is like the sting of a wasp."

"How about Ramon Perez?" asked Maria, jokingly, in order to convince Don Modesto that his *protégé* might lay aside his hopes.

Marisalada burst into a peal of laughter. "If this Raton Perez" (Momo had given this nickname to the young barber) "were to fall into the kettle, I wouldn't be the ant who would weep and sing for him;—still less would I be the one to listen to his singing, for his voice grates on my nervous system—as Don Federico calls it, and which he tells me is more highly strung than the strings of a guitar. I'll show you how this Raton Perez sings, Maria."

Marisalada snatched up an aloe-leaf which lay on the ground with several others, used by Brother Gabriel to screen the first growth of his tomatoes from the north wind.

Holding it like a guitar, she began by caricaturing Ramon Perez's gestures, with her peculiar talent for mimicry, and then went on to sing the following verse, interlarding it with the marvellous shakes, runs, and trills in which he was in the habit of indulging :—

> " What is the matter, my little man—
> Why do you look so pale and wa-aa-n ;
> Is it, perhaps, that your little eye,
> Is fixed on a castle rather too high-igh-igh ? "

" Yes," said Don Modesto, remembering the serenades under Rosita's windows ; " this poor fellow Ramon always did lift his eyes very high."

For nothing could ever persuade Don Modesto that Rosita was not the object of these said serenades. When once an idea got into his head, it was as if it had got into a money-box, not even he himself could get it out again. The pigeonholes of his understanding were so narrow, and so uniformly

arranged, that when an idea entered one which it fitted, there it remained, framed and incrusted *in sæcula sæculorum.*

"I'm going," said Marisalada, throwing the leaf at Brother Gabriel, who, with his back to the others, was busily engaged tying up his hundred and twenty-fifth lettuce.

"Holy Virgin!" he exclaimed, astounded, and then calmly resumed his task without adding another word.

"What a good shot!" laughed Marisalada. "Don Modesto, take me for an artilleryman when you get the cannons for your fort."

"These foolish jokes are not pretty, and you know I don't like them, Marisalada," said the good old woman, displeased; "do as you like with me, but leave Brother Gabriel in peace—it is all he has left to him."

"Come, don't fuss yourself, tia Maria," replied the Gaviota. "Console yourself

with the thought that Brother Gabriel is not made of glass, like his spectacles. My commandant, advise the Seña Rosa Mistica to remove her school to the fort when you get your cannons, for then the girls will be well protected from the artifices of the demon, which come in the shape of squeaking guitars. Well, I'm going, as Don Federico doesn't come; it seems to me that he is vaccinating the whole village, including Seña Rosa, the schoolmaster, and the alcalde."

But the old woman, who was accustomed to Marisalada's odd ways, and never felt hurt at them, called her back, and made her sit down by her side.

Don Modesto, who suspected that she was about to open her batteries, faithful to the neutrality to which he had pledged himself, took his leave, made a half-face to the right, and beat a retreat; but not until good Maria

had given him a pair of lettuces and a bundle of radishes.

"My child," said the grandmother, when they were alone, "what a thing it would be if Don Federico were to marry you! You would be the doctor's lady, the happiest woman on earth, with this man who is a second San Luis Gonzaga, who knows so much, who plays the flute so well, and who is gaining so much money! You would always be dressed nicely, and would live like a lady mayoress: and above all, my daughter, you would be able to assist your poor old father; he's getting old, and it's sad to see him obliged to go to sea, whether it rains or blows, in order that you may want nothing. Besides, Don Federico would then remain with us, comforting and relieving the sick, like an angel as he is."

Marisalada had listened very attentively to the old woman, although she affected not

to do so. When she ceased speaking, there was a short pause, and then the girl said, with an air of indifference,—

"I don't want to marry."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Maria; "perhaps then, you wish to be a nun?"

"As little," replied the Gaviota.

"What then?" asked Maria, astonished. "Will you be neither flesh nor fish? I have never heard of anything else. Woman, my daughter, must belong either to God or to man; otherwise she does not fulfil her vocation either spiritual or temporal."

"I can't help it, señora. My vocation is neither for marriage nor yet for a nunnery."

"Then, my daughter," said old Maria, "you will be simply a nonentity. For my part, Mariquita, I dislike anything out of the common, especially in women. It's so unnatural for one woman not to do what

all others do, that, if I were a man, I'd avoid such a one as I would a wild bull. But," added the old woman in her usual kind manner, "you're very young, and have yet to make as many turns in life as a key in a lock—time changes everything."

Marisalada took her departure.

"Yes!" she said to herself, tying a handkerchief round her head, "he loves me—I knew that already. But—it's like Brother Gabriel and tia Maria—it's like the love of old people. It wouldn't need a ducking from my window to keep it cool. Still, if he married me, I should have a good time of it; that I know. He would let me have my own way, would play to me on the flute whenever I asked him, and would buy me everything that I had a whim or fancy for. If I were his wife, I should have a silk cloak like Quela, Juan Lopez's daughter, and a mantilla of Almagro blonde, like the alca-

desa. What a rage they would be in! But it seems to me that Don Federico, though he may melt like lard in a fryingpan when he hears me sing, has as much idea of marrying me as Don Modesto has of marrying his dear Rosa—of all devils!"

In all this charming soliloquy there had not been a single thought for her father, whose benefit and welfare had been the chief motives that influenced old Maria.

CHAPTER XI.

Tia Maria, convinced that it was useless to look for support or assistance from the influential man, whom she had hoped to make her associate in her matrimonial schemes, determined to carry them through by herself, being certain of overcoming Marisalada's objections, and any that Stein might raise, as easily as Samson overcame the Philistines. Nothing discouraged her—neither the girl's hardness, nor Stein's want of ardour, for love is as persevering as a sister of charity, and as bold as a hero, and love was the mainspring of all the good woman's actions. So, without more ado, she said one day to Stein,—

"Do you know, Don Federico, that when Marisalada was here the other day she told us very plainly, in her graceful way, that she only came here to see you? What do you think of that for honesty?"

"I think that if it were true, it would be ingratitude, of which my nightingale is incapable. She must have been joking."

"Ah! Don Federico, old eyes see clearer than young ones. Does it displease you to be loved?"

"Certainly not; we are agreed as to the truth of that favourite axiom of yours,—'Love cannot say enough!' Still, good Maria, I have generally given more love than I have received."

"Do not say so to me," said Maria, warmly.

"No, indeed, my dear, kind nurse," replied Stein, taking the old woman's hand, and pressing it in his; "in affection we are

equal, but in proofs I am greatly your debtor. Oh! would that I could give you some proof of my affection and gratitude!"

"You can, easily, Don Federico, and I will tell you how."

"At once, my dear tia Maria, tell me quickly what it is."

"That you remain with us; and in order to do so, get married, Don Federico. Then we shall no longer live in continual dread of your wanting to return to your own country; for, as the proverb says, 'Which is my country? My wife's!'"

Stein smiled. "You wish me to marry; but whom, good Maria?"

"Whom? Whom should it be but your nightingale? With her you would have eternal spring in your heart. She is so gay, so graceful, and so moulded to your hand, that she can no more live without you than

you without her. Just as if you didn't love each other like two turtledoves! Any one can see that."

"I am too old for her, tia Maria," replied Stein, sighing and blushing in a way that proved that, so far as he was concerned, the old woman had judged rightly. "I am old for a girl of sixteen, and my heart is an invalid, that desires an easy, tranquil life, and not to be exposed to fresh wounds."

"Old!" exclaimed Maria. "What nonsense; you are barely thirty! Come, this is a groundless reason, Don Federico!"

"What could I desire more," said Stein, "than to enjoy, with an innocent young girl, that soft and holy domestic felicity, which is the purest and truest joy that man can taste? One, also, that God blesses, because He designed it for us. But, tia Maria, she couldn't possibly love me."

"That's another fine piece of wisdom. My

faith! She must, indeed, have a delicate taste who would turn up her nose at you, Don Federico. Now, don't contradict me, or talk nonsense. I say that the woman you love, will be the happiest in the whole world."

"You really think so, tia Maria?"

"As I hope for salvation, and if she were not so, she would deserve to be crucified alive!"

The following morning, on her arrival in the court, Marisalada found herself face to face with Momo, who, seated on a large stone, was breakfasting on bread and sardines.

"Here you are again, Gaviota," was his gracious greeting. "Some day we shall find you in the stock pot! Have you nothing to do at your own home?"

"I neglect everything," she replied, "to come and see your dear face, which enchants me, and those ears which Golondrina might

well envy. Listen, do you know why your ears are so large? When Father Adam met the different animals in Paradise, he gave them each a name; those of your species he called asses. Some days later he collected them together, and inquired of each his name. All replied correctly except your ancestor, who couldn't remember what he was called. This stupidity so enraged Father Adam, that he seized hold of the foolish creature by the ears, screaming out as he pulled them violently, "You are an ass—an ass." Suiting the action to the word, Marisalada laid hold of Momo's ears, and pulled them as if she wished to pull them off. It was lucky for her, that at the first howl that Momo gave with all the strength of his capacious lungs, a mouthful of bread and sardine went the wrong way, causing such a violent fit of coughing that she, light as a true sea-gull, was able to escape from the

clutches of the vulture. "Good day, my nightingale," said Stein, entering the court.

"A pretty nightingale indeed, ehé, ehé, ehé," grunted and coughed Momo. "Nightingale! To my mind she's the veriest magpie that has chattered this summer! ehé, ehé, ehé."

"Come, Maria," continued Stein, "come and write, and read the verses which I translated yesterday. Did they not please you?"

"I don't remember them," replied Marisalada. "Were they by chance those about the country where the citrons flower? They don't grow here, they are dried up, since Brother Gabriel's tears were not sufficient to water them. Let the verses alone, Don Federico, and play me that Nocturno of Weber's, the words are these:

'Listen, listen, my beloved one, to the nightingale's song,
On every branch blooms a flower,
Ere she is silent, and they fade,
Listen, oh listen, my beloved one.'"

"What fine words this Gaviota has learnt!" murmured Momo, "they are as suitable in her mouth as sugarplums rolled in pounded garlic."

"After you have read, I will play Weber's Serenade," said Stein, who only by promising this reward, could induce Maria to attend to her studies. She took the paper Stein offered her with a bad grace, and read fluently, though somewhat sulkily, some verses by a German poet on Solitude.

"Marisalada," said Stein, when she had finished, "you, who do not know the world, cannot imagine how much profound truth and how much philosophy there is in these verses. Do you remember my explanation of philosophy?"

"Yes, señor," replied Marisalada, "the science of being happy. But in this matter, neither rules nor science are worth much, for every one is happy according to his own

notion. Don Modesto would be so if they would mount some guns on his fort, which is as great a ruin as he is; Brother Gabriel, in the return of the Prior and his bells to the monastery; tia Maria, if you wouldn't go away; my father, in catching a conger-eel; and Momo, in doing all the mischief he can."

Stein laughed, and placed his hand affectionately on the girl's shoulder, saying, "And in what does your happiness consist?"

Marisalada hesitated a moment before answering, raised her large eyes, looked at Stein, dropped them again, glanced at Momo, smiled inwardly on seeing that his ears were redder than a tomato, and at last asked in reply,—

"What would yours consist in, Don Federico? In returning to your country?"

"No," replied Stein.

"In what then?" persisted Maria.

"I will tell you, my nightingale; but first tell me in what yours would consist."

"In always hearing you play the flute," replied Marisalada, sincerely.

At this moment old Maria came out of the kitchen with the excellent intention of fanning the flame; it happened to her, however, as it often does to others, that excess of zeal prevents the very things most desired to be brought about.

"Don't you see, Don Federico," she said, "what a pretty girl Marisalada is?—what a beautiful figure, and how stout she is?"

Momo, overhearing his grandmother, muttered, while biting the head off a sardine,—

"The very model of her father's fishing-rod, with legs and arms that give her the look of a great grasshopper; and she's long and thin enough to make a good bar for my door—ugh!"

"Be quiet, you disgusting hunchback,

like a cabbage without a stalk," retorted Gaviota, in a low voice.

"Yes, yes," replied Stein to Maria; "she is beautiful; her eyes are exactly of the far-famed Arab type."

"They are more like two hedgehogs, and every glance is a thorn," grunted Momo.

"And this pretty mouth, that sings like a seraph," continued the old woman, stroking her favourite's face.

"Did you ever!" said Momo; "a mouth like a basket, which gives forth toads and snakes!"

"And your horrible mouth!" cried Marisalada, unable to contain her rage this time. "Your horrible mouth, which only doesn't reach from ear to ear, because your face is so wide that it got tired halfway!"

For sole reply Momo chaunted, in three different keys,—

"Gaviota! Gaviota! Gaviota!"

"Romo! Romo! Romo! Flat-nose!" sang Maria, in her magnificent voice.

"Is it possible, Mariquita," said Stein, "that you are really vexed at Momo's nonsense? His jokes are stupid and coarse, but not malicious."

"A little of what he has to excess, wouldn't be amiss in you, Don Federico," replied Marisalada. "I'll tell you what it is, I'm not going to put up with this block-head, who's as hard as a stone, rougher than a thorn tree, and harsher than untanned leather. So I shall go." And with this the Gaviota left the court; Stein followed her.

"You're a good-for-nothing fellow," said tia Maria to her grandson; "you've more gall in your heart than good blood in your veins; you should have more respect for women, blockhead! But there's no one in the whole village more wicked, or more hated than you."

"What a fuss you make about this sea rubbish!" replied Momo; "look at the state she's made my ears in! The devil only knows what witchcraft this stinging jelly-fish has used to blind you and Don Federico. Think of a sea-gull who can read and write! who ever saw the like of that? This great slut does nothing all day but make noises in her throat like water boiling on the fire. She doesn't cook her father's dinner. He has to cook it himself. She doesn't look after her own clothes—you have to do it. Yet her father, Don Federico, and you, can't make enough of her. You'd like his Holiness to make her a saint. She'll repay you! She'll repay you! sooner or later, only wait awhile!"

Stein overtaking Marisalada, said to her, "Of what use, Mariquita, have been all my endeavours to cultivate your understanding, if you have not even acquired the small

amount of superiority necessary to enable you to rise above follies that have neither value nor importance?"

"According to what I understand, Don Federico," retorted Maria; "the only value of superiority is to raise me above others, not to keep me beneath them."

"Good heavens, Maria! how can you make such a mistake? Superiority clearly teaches us not to be puffed up by praise, nor to rebel against wrongs. "But," he added, smiling, "these mistakes are caused by your youth, and warm southern blood. By the time your hair is as gray as mine, you will have learnt the little importance of such things. Have you noticed my gray hairs, Maria?"

"Yes," she replied.

"And yet I am quite young; but sorrow soon whitens the head. My heart has remained young, Maria, and I could offer

you spring flowers, if you would not be frightened at the signs of winter upon my forehead."

"In truth," replied Maria, unable to resist her natural impulse; "a gray-haired lover doesn't please me."

"It is as I thought," said Stein, sadly. "My heart is trusting, and tia Maria was mistaken in assuring me that my happiness was possible, and so causing hopes to spring in my heart, born like the air-flower without roots, supported by the breath of the breeze."

Marisalada, who perceived that her roughness had repelled a man of too great delicacy to persist, and of sufficient modesty to persuade himself that the single objection was enough to annul all his other advantages, said suddenly,—

"Although a gray-haired lover doesn't please me, a gray-haired husband wouldn't frighten me."

Stein was perfectly taken aback by this abrupt speech, and still more with the decision and coolness with which it was spoken. After a moment, he said, smiling,—

"Will you marry me then, beautiful daughter of nature?"

"Why not?" replied the Gaviota.

"Maria," said Stein, with emotion, "she who accepts a man for her husband, intending to unite herself to him for life, or more truly to become two people with one life,—as in a torch, two wicks form one flame,—favours him more than she who accepts him for a lover."

By this time they had reached the seashore, and Stein begged Maria to sit down by him on some rocks. They were silent for some time. Stein was much agitated; Maria, wearied, had taken up a piece of stick, and was drawing with it on the sand.

"How nature speaks to the heart of

man!" said Stein at last. "What sympathy there is between everything that God has created. A pure life is like a serene day; a life of tumultuous passions is like a day of tempests. Look at those clouds which, slowly and darkly, are placing themselves between the sun and the earth; they may be likened to duty, which interposes itself between the heart and an unworthy love, letting fall upon the former its cold but clear and pure emanations. Happy the earth upon which they do not fall in vain.

"But our happiness will be as unclouded as the sky in May, for you will always love me, will you not, Maria?"

Maria, whose coarse, uncultivated mind was unable to appreciate Stein's poetical and ascetic feelings, had not much inclination to reply; but as she could hardly avoid doing so, she wrote in the sand, with the stick she was playing with, the word "Always."

Stein mistook her indifference for modesty, and continued—

"Look at the sea; hark how its waves murmur with a voice full of enchantment and terror! They seem to be whispering secrets in an unknown tongue. The waves, Maria, have been personified as seductive and terrible syrens, by the fantastic imagination of the Greeks; beautiful creatures, without any heart, who allure men with their soft voices, in order to destroy them. But you, Maria, do not attract with your sweet voice to repay with ingratitude. No; you are a syren in attraction, but not in perfidy. Is it not so? You will never be ungrateful?"

"*Never*," wrote Maria in the sand; and the waves amused themselves by effacing the words she wrote; as if parodying days—the waves of time, which efface in the heart, as did they in the sand, that which

one could swear would remain graven there for ever.

"Why don't you answer me with your sweet voice?" asked Stein.

"What would you have me do, Don Federico?" she replied, pettishly. "It sticks in my throat to tell a man that I love him. I'm harsh and cold mannered, as old Maria says, though she loves me none the less for it. We are all as God made us. I'm like my father—of few words."

"Then, if you are like your father, I desire nothing better; for tio Pedro—I will call him my father also, Maria—has the most loving heart that human breast ever contained. Hearts like his beat only in the bright breasts of angels, and in men of a superior nature."

"My father a superior man!" said Marisalada to herself, hardly able to repress a

derisive laugh. "I'm glad, at all events, that he appears so."

"Mariquita," said Stein, drawing close to her, "let us dedicate our pure and holy love to God, promising to be faithful to each other, and to all the duties He imposes, when we are united at His altar. Let me embrace you as my wife, as my faithful companion."

"No," said Maria, starting back, and frowning. "Nobody shall touch me."

"Very well, my pretty coy one," said Stein, gently. "I respect your delicacy, and submit to your will. Does not one of your ancient and divine poets say, that the greatest happiness 'is to obey in loving?'"

CHAPTER XII.

The gratitude which the fisherman felt to Stein, for having saved his daughter's life, changed, when he saw him so much interested in her, into a friendship so deep, that it could only be compared with the admiration he felt for his great qualities.

Since their first acquaintance, the rough sailor and the learned scholar had sympathized; for people who resemble each other in goodness of heart, feel such an attraction when brought together, that, overcoming the distance between them, they salute each other as brothers.

So it was, that when Stein offered himself

as a son-in-law, the good father was so deeply agitated by the joy he felt in his heart, that he could only seize Stein's hand, and implore him, for God's sake, to live with him in the cabin, to which Stein cordially agreed. Then the fishermen seemed to regain all the strength and agility of his youth, and employed it in repairing and beautifying his dwelling. He cleared out and fitted up the little attic, to which he retired, giving up the rooms in the second story to his children. He white-washed the walls, levelled the flooring, which he then covered with a neat palm-leaf mat, of his own making, and commissioned old Maria to select some simple furniture.

The news of Stein's approaching marriage caused also the greatest rejoicing to all who knew and loved him. Grandmamma Maria was unable to sleep, from sheer joy, for three whole nights. She predicted that now that Don Federico was about to reside perma-

nently in the country, none of the inhabitants would die of anything but old age.

Brother Gabriel was so pleased with this speech, and so happy in witnessing tia Maria's joy, that, carried away by his feelings, he actually went so far as to make a joke, the first and last in his life. In a low voice he said, that the clergyman would then forget the *De Profundis*.

This joke so delighted old Maria, that for the space of a fortnight she never spoke to a living soul, without repeating it, to the honour and glory of her protégé, who, embarrassed beyond measure by the unexpected success of his joke, made a vow never again to fall into the same temptation as long as he lived.

Don Modesto's opinion was, that the Gaviota had gained the great prize in the lottery, and the people in the place the second. "For," said he, "if I had met a surgeon as

clever as Don Federico at the siege of Gaeta, I shouldn't be now one-handed." The opinion of Dolores was, that if the fisherman had twice given life to his daughter, the will of God had twice given her happiness, by allotting to her such a father, and such a husband. Manuel observed, there was a cake in heaven reserved for those husbands who never repented of matrimony, and that up to the present time, nobody had ever tasted it. His wife retorted that this was because husbands never went to heaven.

As for Momo, he said that since Gaviota had got a husband, even the plague need not despair.

Rosa Mistica took it in another way, Marisalada had increased the list of her offences by one of recent date.

The month of Mary, as it is called, had arrived, and, among other acts of worship, several devout females met together to sing

hymns in honour of the Virgin, to the accompaniment of a wretched harpsichord played by the old blind organist. Rosa presided over this religious Philharmonic Society. Some pure and agreeable voices joined in this concert with hers, which had by no means ceased to be rough and shrill.

Rosa, who could not deny Marisalada's great talent, smothered her resentment for the sake of the month of Mary, and, employing Don Modesto as mediator, begged him to induce the fisherman's daughter to take part in this chorus of virgins.

Don Modesto took his stick, and marched off.

Marisalada, who was not inclined to devotion, and who didn't much care to exercise her skill in such company, gave the veteran in reply a simple "No," without prologue or epilogue.

This monosyllable terrified Don Modesto

more than a discharge of artillery, and he was utterly at a loss what to do. He was one of those men who, though good-hearted enough to sincerely desire their friends' welfare, have not sufficient courage to contribute to its increase, nor a sufficiently fertile imagination to suggest means for promoting it.

"Tio Pedro," he said to the fisherman, after this peremptory refusal, "do you know I am frightened to death. What will Rosita say? What will the *padre cura* say? What will the whole village say? Couldn't you find some means of persuading her?"

"If she won't sing, who can make her?" replied the fisherman.

So poor Don Modesto found that he must resign himself to be the bearer of the unpleasant message, which he knew would not only offend, but would also shock his saintly hostess.

"I would a thousand times rather face all the batteries of Gaeta than Rosita with this *no* in my mouth," he said to himself on his way back. "Holy Virgin, how shall I tell her!"

And Don Modesto was right, for in vain did he adorn his message with a modifying preface; in vain did he comment upon it with explanatory notes; in vain did he embellish it with high-sounding expressions: do all he could, Rosita was, as he feared, exceedingly offended, and she exclaimed, in a sententious tone, "Those who receive gifts from God, and refuse to employ them in His service, deserve to lose them." So when she heard of the intended marriage, she gave a deep sigh, and lifting her eyes to heaven, said, "Poor Don Federico! So good! so pious! May God make them happy. He can do so, for nothing is impossible to His Omnipotence."

Momo, with his usual bad-heartedness, was well pleased to carry the news of the wedding to Ramon Perez.

"I say, Raton," he said, "you may eat onions till you're stuffed, for the devil has tempted Don Federico to marry Gaviota."

"Really?" asked the barber, in consternation.

"Are you astonished? It astonishes me beyond measure that there should be people who deserve to be beaten for their bad taste. Fancy falling in love with this baggage, who is for all the world like a snake standing upright, shooting lightning from her eyes and venom from her mouth. But Don Federico verifies the truth of the old proverb, 'He who marries late, marries badly.'"

"It doesn't surprise me," replied Ramon Perez, "that Don Federico should love Marisalada, but it does that she should like this foreigner, with hair like tow, apple

face, and eyes like a fish. Why doesn't the ungrateful girl remember the saying, 'He who goes to a distance to marry, either goes to be deceived or to deceive.'"

"In his case it can't be the latter, for Don Federico is a worthy man and no mistake. But this creature has bewitched him with her singing, which lasts from sunrise to sunset. It's all she can do. I have already told Don Federico to remember the proverb, 'Take a house that has a fireplace, and a wife that can spin,' but he pays no attention to it. He's a very Juan Lanas. As for you, Raton Perez, your nose is nicely put out of joint."

"It's the old story," said the barber, giving such a sudden twist to the screw of his guitar that he broke the string. "A stranger drives us from our home; but you know well enough, Momo, that I shan't break my heart about it. The world will come to

an end one day. For a dead king, there's a successor."

And scraping his guitar furiously, he sang in a contemptuous tone,—

"They say she does not care for me,
I think I shall survive the pain;
The juice of a green mulberry—
Removes the darkest mulberry stain.

"And so, if this one loves me not,
'Twill cost three capers and a sigh;
With all the money I have got,
Another love I soon can buy."

CHAPTER XIII.

STEIN and Gaviota's wedding was celebrated in the church of Villamar.

Instead of his coloured flannel shirt, the fisherman wore a highly-starched white one, and a new jacket of coarse blue cloth, in which finery he was so much embarrassed that he could hardly move. Don Modesto, who was one of the witnesses, appeared in all the pomp of an old uniform, worn out by dint of brushing, and fitting him like a sack, he having become very much thinner. His nankin trousers, which Rosa had washed at least a thousand times, were so much shrunken that they barely reached halfway

down his leg. His epaulets had become the colour of copper. His three-cornered hat, whose proud appearance the wear of forty years had not been able to affect, worthily occupied its lofty position. But at the same time, the cross of honour, bravely won on the battle-field, shone on the noble breast of the poor old soldier like a pure diamond in a tarnished setting.

According to custom, the women wore black during the ceremony, but changed their dresses for the *fête*. Marisalada was all in white; tia Maria and Dolores in dresses that Stein had given them for the occasion. They were made of cotton-stuff, smuggled from Gibraltar, and the pattern, very fashionable in those days, was called "rainbow rays," from being a mixture of the most opposite and unharmonious colours, so glaring that it almost seemed as if the manufacturer had wished to make fun of his

Andalusian customers. In short, every one made themselves as smart as possible, except Momo, who didn't choose to put himself out of the way on the occasion, which made Gaviota say to him, "You're right, jack-anapes, for—

> 'An ape is an ape, a varlet's a varlet,
> Though they be clad in velvet or scarlet.'"

"I suppose you think that because you're to be the *doctoress*, you will no longer be a sea-gull," replied Momo; "and that your new clothes make you pretty. Oh, yes! you're very lovely in your white dress! If you'd only put on a red hat, you'd look just like a lucifer-match."

And he began to sing, in a voice horribly out of tune,—

> "Ho! ho! your'e as fair as a crow,
> And lovely as famine, my beauty, you know!
> Like nice yellow wax, when it's near to the fire,
> Is the bloom in your cheek; and you're plump as a wire."

Marisalada replied,—

"Your mouth, when it's opened, appears just as wide
As a dirty clothes-basket or wider.—Inside,
Just like earrings of gold, each with three golden drops,
Hang the teeth which adorn your most elegant chops."

And then she turned her back on him.

Momo, who was never behindhand in any question of insolence or abuse, replied boldly,—

"Go along and get the blessing; it'll be the first you ever had in your life, and I'll be sworn that it'll be the last."

The wedding feast was held in the village, at tia Maria's old house, as the fisherman's cabin was much too small for such an assembly. Stein, who had saved some money in his profession, though he generally gave his medical services gratis, wished everything to be done in good style, and that there should be amusement for every one. Accordingly three guitars had been procured, and there was abundance of wine,

negus, cakes, and biscuits. The guests sang, danced, drank, and were merry; nor were wanting the jokes and smart sayings peculiar to the country.

Old Maria, who acted as godmother to the bride, went about serving the refreshments, repeating ever and anon,—

"I am as happy as though I were the bride."

To which Brother Gabriel invariably added,—

"I am as happy as though I were the bridegroom."

"Mother," said Manuel, as she passed by him, "the colour of that dress is somewhat gay for a widow."

"Be quiet, evil-tongue!" replied his mother; everything should be gay on such a day as this; besides, one mustn't look at the teeth of a gift horse. Brother Gabriel, take this cup of negus and this cake—drink

the health of the newly-married couple, before you return to the monastery."

"I drink the health of the newly-married couple." said Gabriel; and having emptied his glass, he slipped away from the feast, without any one but Maria having been aware of his presence, or noticing his absence.

Gradually the party became more and more animated.

"Bomba!" cried the sacristan, who was a little humpbacked cripple.

Every one was silent at this word, which announced that a toast was about to be proposed.

"I drink," he continued, "to the health of the newly-married pair, to that of all this honourable company, and to the repose of the souls of the blessed."

"Bravo! drink all, and long live La Mancha, which gives us wine instead of water!"

"Now it's your turn, Ramon Perez; give us a song; don't keep your voice for a better occasion."

Ramon sang,—

"The bride I wish all happiness,
And from my heart congratulate;
As for the bridegroom, I confess,
I can't help envying his fate."

"Well sung!" cried all. "Now for the fandango and dancing."

At the first sound of the prelude to this truly national dance, a man and a woman rose together, and placed themselves opposite each other. Its graceful movements are performed almost without change of place, by balancing the body with elegance, and marking the time with the merry clink of the castanets.

After a little, the two dancers gave up their places to two others, who came forward as they retired. This was repeated several

times, according to the custom of the country. Meanwhile, the guitarist sang,—

"In church, the bride to him is tied,
With bonds she ne'er can sever;
Alas! and she who entered free,
Comes out, a slave for ever!"

"Bomba!" suddenly cried one of the party, who fancied himself a wit. "I drink to the *Heal all*, God has sent to this country, in order that we may all live as long as Methuselah; with the condition, that when he has the chance, he shall not prolong the life of my wife and my purgatory."

This sentiment called forth a burst of cheers and clapping of hands

"And what do you say to all this, Manuel?" cried the others.

"What do I say?" replied Manuel; "why, I say nothing."

"That won't do, if you mean to be silent, go to church. Come, give us a toast; look alive, man."

Manuel took a glass of negus, and said,—

"I drink to the bride and bridegroom, to all our friends, to our commandant, and to the resurrection of San Cristobal."

"Viva, the commandant! Viva, the commandant!" cried the whole party. "And you, Manuel, who can do it so well, give us a song."

"Take care, my man, what you're doing,
You love a sweet girl,—then you wed.
Ah! sweet indeed is the wooing;
The rest you'll regret, till you're dead!"

After he had sung some other verses, the wit of the party said to him,—

"Manuel! stupid fellows who have neither idea nor rhyme sing like that; you, who can make good verses, especially when you're a little elevated, give us a regular sonnet in honour of the happy pair. Drink this glass of wine to set your tongue free."

Manuel took the glass of wine and sang,—

"Come, kiss my lips, my red red wine,
Thou blest consoler of my woes!
Bright spirit of that fruit divine,
That in a bower of green leaves grows,
And ripens in the warm sunshine;
Till, crushed beneath the wine-press, flows
Its blood to brighten mine:—
Come lend me voice, and lend me power,
My task is hard; for man and wife,
Are always happy for an hour,
And I would wish these so for life.

"Now it's your turn, Ramon. Has the liquor stuck in your throat? You're more insipid than a tomato salad."

Ramon took his guitar and sang,—

"I watched her as she went to mass,
And marked each footprint on the grass;
She could not say I might not kiss
The hard dry ground, and that was bliss!"

This verse being followed by one rather too florid, tia Maria went up to Stein and said to him,—

"Don Federico, the wine's beginning to

talk. It's midnight, and the children are alone in the house with Momo and Brother Gabriel, and I'm afraid that Manuel is raising his elbow more than is good for him. Pedro is already asleep in a corner, and I think it would be well to beat a retreat. The donkeys are harnessed. Shall we take French leave?"

A few moments later the three women mounted their asses and set out for the convent. The men accompanied them on foot, while Ramon, in a sudden fit of jealousy and rage at seeing the young couple depart, striking his guitar with unusual vigour, bellowed rather than sang the following couplet.—

"You've given me the pumpkin,—that is, refused my suit;
I eat it with tomatoes, which are love's special fruit;
Ah! I would live on pumpkins, if I could hope to find,
That when I'd eaten plenty, you'd be a little kind."

"What a lovely night!" said Stein to his wife, raising his eyes to heaven. "Look at

that starry sky! look at that moon in its full beauty,—as I am full of joy, with nothing to wish for and nothing to regret."

"And I was enjoying myself so much!" said Marisalada. "I don't see why we need have left so early."

"Tia Maria," said Pedro Santalo to the good old woman, "now we may die in peace."

"That is true," she replied; "but we may also live happily, which is better."

"Is it possible that you don't know when to stop when you've a glass in your hand?" said Dolores to her husband. "When you once set sail there is no cable that will stop you."

"Caramba!" replied Manuel, "I came away with you,—what more do you wish? If you say another word, I'll go back to the feast."

The cry of the drinkers could still be dis-

tinguished,—"Long live La Mancha which gives us wine instead of water."

Dolores was silent, fearful lest Manuel should put his threat into execution.

"José," said Manuel to his brother-in-law, who also was of the party, "is it full moon?"

"I should say it was," replied the shepherd, "don't you see what's coming out of its eye? Don't you know what it is?"

"Probably a tear," said Manuel, laughing.

"No. It's a man."

"A man!" exclaimed Dolores, fully believing what her brother said. "And who is the man?"

"I don't know; but I know his name."

"And what is that?" she asked.

"He's called Venus," replied José.

Manuel burst out laughing; he had drunk more than usual, and, as they say, he had merry wine in him.

"Don Federico," he said, "shall I, as the oldest benedict present, give you a piece of advice?"

"For heaven's sake, hold your tongue, Manuel," said Dolores.

"Will you let me alone? If not, I'll turn tail. Listen, Don Federico: in the first place, 'for a wife or a dog, bread in one hand, and a stick in the other.'"

"Manuel!" repeated Dolores.

"Will you leave me in peace, or shall I go back?" he retorted.

Dolores was silent.

"Don Federico," began Manuel.

"Do me the favour to be silent, Manuel," interrupted his mother.

"Well, this is rather hard," growled her son; "one would think we were following a funeral."

"Don't you know," observed the shepherd, "that Don Federico doesn't like these jests."

"Don Federico," said Manuel, taking leave of the couple as they turned off towards the cabin, "when you repent of what you have just done, we'll go partners, and sing the same song as a duet."

As he went on his way to the monastery, his clear, strong voice was heard through the silence of the night, singing,—

"Death robbed me of my wife and horse
In one sad hour,—I wept of course.
Was it my wife I mourned? ah, no!
'Twas the loss of my horse that grieved me so."

"Get to bed as quick as you can, Manuel," said his mother, on their arrival.

"My wife will look after that," he replied. "Won't you, brunette?"

"I wish you were sound asleep already," said Dolores.

"Hark ye, José," said Manuel; "did you ever find among the thickets and caves of the wilderness anything that would stop a woman's tongue? If you have found

such a thing, there are plenty of people who will gladly buy it of you, at its weight in gold. I've never met with it in this world, and I can't find in the Bible that it exists in the next."

Upon which he began to sing,—

"You'll find it an easier matter,
To put out the light of the sun,
Than to stop a fair woman's clatter,
When in anger it once has begun.
'Tis useless to coax, or to flatter,
Try the stick!—it's no use, they don't mind
Whatever you do, they will chatter
Be you ever so cross, or so kind."

CHAPTER XIV.

THREE years had passed away. Stein, who was one of the few men who require little of life, believed himself to be happy. He loved his wife tenderly, and every day became more and more attached to his father-in-law, and to the excellent family who had received him in a dying condition, and whose affection for him had never diminished. His uniform rural life was in harmony with his simple tastes, and grave, placid disposition. Indeed, the monotony was not without charms for him. An equable existence is like a dreamless sleep, and resembles melodies composed of few notes, but which soothe by

their softness. Perhaps nothing is productive of such pleasing recollections as monotony; that chain of days, no one of which can be distinguished from that which follows or that which precedes it.

Great, therefore, was the surprise of the inhabitants of the cabin, when one morning Momo came running in at full speed, shouting to Stein to hurry, without losing an instant, to the monastery.

"Has one of the family fallen ill?" asked Stein, alarmed.

"No," replied Momo, as they walked along; "it is a señor they call, his Essence,* who has been hunting wild-boars and stags in the woods with his friends. Jumping a deep ravine, his horse slipped, and both man and beast fell into it. The horse was killed, and his Essence broke every bone in his body. They carried him to our place on a

* Momo meant *Excellency.*

stretcher, and the monastery is turned into a regular Tower of Babel. Every one is running about in confusion, like a flock of sheep with a wolf among them. The only one who takes it coolly is he who has had the tumble. He's something like a man! My grandmother told them we had a rare clever surgeon here; but they wouldn't believe her. However, as it would take two days to get one from Cadiz, and longer still from Seville, his *Essence* said he would see the doctor my grandmother recommended. So, of course, I had to come for you; for it seems as if there was no one in the world, or out of it, who can do anything without me. Now I'll tell you what I'd do in your place: if I were you, after being so despised, I'd see them further before I went near them."

"Even if I could forget my duties as a Christian and a doctor," replied Stein, "I

should need a heart of bronze to see a fellow-creature suffer, without doing my best to relieve him. Besides, these gentlemen couldn't feel confidence in me without knowing me; so there is no need to be offended, neither would there be, even if they did know me."

With this they arrived at the convent. Tia Maria, who was waiting for Stein with great impatience, took him at once to the patient's bedside. He had been placed in what was formerly the prior's cell, where they had hastily prepared as good a bed as they could for him. Stein and Maria made their way through the crowd of servants and sportsmen who surrounded the invalid—a tall young man, with black curly hair, and a handsome, pale, but calm face. As soon as Stein saw him he uttered a cry, drew near, then suddenly stopped, crossed his trembling hands, and exclaimed,—

"My God! Señor Duque!"

"Do you know me?" asked the duke, who was no other than the Duke of Almanza. "Do you know me?" he repeated, raising his head, and fixing his large black eyes on Stein, without being able to discover who it was that spoke to him.

"He doesn't remember me," murmured Stein, while two large tears rolled down his cheeks. "That is not strange, for generous souls forget the good they do, while grateful ones eternally preserve the remembrance of that they receive."

"A bad beginning," said one of those standing by. "A surgeon who weeps!" "What an unlucky choice!" added another.

"Señor," said the duke to Stein, "I place myself in your hands. I have confidence in God, in you, and in my good star. Begin your work, and let us lose no time."

At these words Stein raised his head. His

face was perfectly calm; and with a quiet but firm gesture, he motioned the spectators to move back. Then he examined the patient with a clever, practised hand, and with such confidence and dexterity, that every one was silent, no sound was heard in the room but the quick breathing of the invalid.

"My Lord Duke," said Stein, when the examination was over, "your ankle is dislocated and your leg broken, no doubt because the whole weight of the horse fell on it. Nevertheless, I believe that I can promise a complete cure."

"Shall I be lame?" inquired the duke.

"I think I can safely say not."

"In that case," continued the duke, "I shall say that you are the first surgeon in the world."

Stein, without change of manner, sent for Manuel, whose strength and self-possession

he well knew, and could place confidence in. With his help he commenced operations.

The treatment was necessarily very painful, but Stein appeared to take no notice of the pain his patient was suffering, and which almost made him lose consciousness. At the end of half-an-hour the duke was able to repose, still suffering, but much quieted. Instead of marks of distrust and want of confidence, Stein received congratulations and the highest compliments from the great man's friends, to which he, returning to his natural modesty and bashfulness, replied with all courtesy.

Happy old Maria was in a perfect bath of rose-water.

"Didn't I tell you so?" she repeated over and over again to every one present. "Isn't it just as I said?"

At his request, now that their minds were at ease, the duke's friends prepared to return

home. The patient begged to be left alone under the care of his clever doctor—his old friend, as he called him,—and even sent away nearly all his servants. In this way he and his doctor could renew their acquaintance at their ease. The former was one of those men of philosophical character who do not allow habit or affection to interfere with their physical well-being; one of those privileged beings who raise themselves above the level of circumstances, not by fits and starts, but steadily, by virtue of a firm will and energetic nature. His was one of those hearts which beat beneath the armour of the fifteenth century, and which now remain only in Spain.

Stein related to the duke his campaigns, his misadventures, his arrival at the monastery, his love, and his marriage. His friend listened with much interest, and the narrative made him wish to see Marisalada,

the fisherman, and the cabin which Stein esteemed more than a splendid palace. Accordingly, the first day that he was able to go out, Stein took him down to the sea-shore. It was the beginning of spring, and a delicious fresh breeze came from the ocean. Fort St. Cristobal was adorned with its green crown, as if in honour of the high personage who saw it for the first time; the roof of the cabin, in imitation of the gardens of Semiramis, was one mass of blooming flowers, which were crowded together, gently moved by the zephyr, like so many timid maidens confiding their loves to each other. The sea rolled its soft, peaceful waves to the duke's feet, as though to bid him welcome. Far up in the sky, too high for the eye to see the singer, could be heard the song of the lark. The duke, somewhat fatigued, seated himself on a rock. He was a poet, and enjoyed the beauty of the scene in

silence. Suddenly a voice was heard, singing a simple, melancholy air. The duke, surprised, looked at Stein, who smiled. The song was continued.

"Stein, are there syrens in these waves, or angels in this atmosphere?"

Instead of replying to this question, Stein took out his flute, and repeated the same melody.

Then the duke saw a young brunette coming, half running and half leaping, towards them, who stopped suddenly on seeing him.

"This is my wife," said Stein, "my Maria."

"Who possesses the most wonderful voice in the world," said the duke, enthusiastically. "Señora, I have been to every theatre and opera in Europe, but never have I heard such enchanting notes as yours!"

If Maria's dark smooth skin could have

changed colour, the blush of pride and pleasure would have been perceptible in her cheeks, on hearing such high praise from the lips of so eminent a personage, and so competent a judge. The duke continued:—

"Between you, you have all that is necessary for making your way in the world. And can you wish to remain here, buried in obscurity and oblivion? It cannot be; it would be wrong to deprive society of your talents. I repeat that it must not and shall not be!"

"We are so happy here, my Lord Duke," replied Stein, "that to make any change in our situation, would seem like ingratitude to fate."

"Stein," exclaimed the duke, "where is that firm, quiet courage, which I admired so much in you when we sailed together on board the 'Royal Sovereign?' What has become of that love of your profession, and

that desire to devote your knowledge to the benefit of an afflicted humanity? Has happiness enervated you? It's true then that happiness makes men egoists?" Stein hung his head.

"Señora," continued the duke, "at your age, and with your gifts, can you decide to remain always fixed to your rock, like those ruins?"

Maria, whose heart was palpitating with intense joy and eager hope, replied nevertheless, with apparent coolness, "What else can I do?"

"And your father?" said her husband, almost reproachfully.

"He is fishing," she replied, affecting to misunderstand the true sense of his question. The duke, then entered into a full explanation of all the advantages she might gain from her wonderful talent, which would build for her a throne and a fortune.

Maria listened eagerly, while the duke admired the play of her countenance, which was by turns cold and enthusiastic, passive and energetic.

When the duke rose to go home, Maria whispered hastily to Stein, "We will go, we will go. What! Fate calls me, offering me crowns, and shall I be deaf? No, no!"

Silently and sadly Stein followed the duke.

When they entered the monastery, tia Maria asked the duke, who was very kind to his sick-nurse, his opinion of her dear Marisalada. "Isn't she a pretty creature?" she asked.

"Certainly," he replied. "Her eyes are so bright that, as the poet says, only an eagle could look at them without flinching."

"And isn't she graceful, and hasn't she a beautiful voice?" continued the old woman.

"As for her voice," answered the duke,

"it is much too beautiful to be thrown away in these deserts; your nightingales and linnets are good enough for you. Both husband and wife must return with me."

Had a thunderbolt fallen at Maria's feet, it would not have terrified her so much as these words did. "And they? Do they wish to go?" she exclaimed, frightened.

"They must wish it," replied the duke, entering his own room.

Maria remained bewildered, and confused for some time. Then she went to seek Brother Gabriel. "They are going away!" she said, bathed in tears.

"Thank God!" returned the monk. "They have already done their best to spoil the marble flags of the prior's cell. What will his Reverence say when he returns?"

"You don't understand me," said Maria, impatiently. "It's Don Federico and his wife who are going."

"They going?" ejaculated Gabriel; "it can't be possible."

"Is it true?" asked Maria of Stein, who had come to find her.

"She wishes it," he replied sadly.

"That is what her father always said," continued Maria; "and with that answer he would have allowed her to die, had it not been for us. Ah! Don Federico, you are so comfortable here! Are you going to imitate the Spaniard, who, being well off, yet wished for something better?"

"I neither hope, nor believe, that I could be better off in any part of the world, my dear tia Maria."

"Some day you will repent," she continued. "And poor tio Pedro! My God! Why did the turmoil of the world come to disturb us here!"

At this moment Don Modesto entered. For some time he had discontinued his

visits, not because the duke did not receive him most kindly, nor because he failed to inspire the veteran with the same irresistible attraction that all those felt who came in contact with him; but because Don Modesto was a slave to forms, and did not consider that it would be proper to present himself before the Duke, General, and ex-Minister of War, without due ceremony.

Now, Rosa Mistica had told him that his uniform was not fit for active service, and this was the cause of his visits being discontinued. When tia Maria told him that the duke would leave the monastery in two days' time, Don Modesto immediately retired. He had formed a project, and required time to realize it. When Marisalada informed her father that she was resolved to follow the duke's advice, the poor old man's grief would have melted a heart of stone.

Nevertheless, his grief was silent. He listened to his daughter's magnificent projects without censuring or applauding them; and to her promises of returning to the cabin without either demanding or rejecting them. He felt for his child, as an old bird feels for its young one, when it determines to leave the nest, to which it will never return. The good father wept inwardly, if such an expression may be used.

On the following day the horses, servants, and mules that the duke had ordered for his journey, arrived. Shouts, farewells, and preparations for departure, resounded in every corner of the monastery. Brother Gabriel was obliged to work at his baskets under the cedar-tree, beneath whose shade had once stood the pump. Morrongo climbed up to the highest roof, and basked in the sun, looking down disdainfully on the tumult in the court; Palomo barked, growled, and

protested so energetically against the foreign invasion, that Manuel told Momo to shut him up.

"There's no doubt," muttered Momo, "that my grandmother, who is the most obstinate quack on earth, has some magnet by which she attracts sick folk to the place. This makes the third."

The day of departure arrived. The duke was ready in his apartment, Stein and Maria were at the monastery, as well as the poor fisherman, who could hardly lift his eyes from the ground, and who was bent double with sorrow. This sorrow had aged him more than the weight of years, and all the storms of the sea. On his arrival he seated himself on the steps of the marble cross. Don Modesto was also there, but with consternation painted on his face. His eyebrows formed two arches of prodigious height, and his scanty locks of hair were

hanging all on one side. Deep sighs heaved from his breast.

"What's the matter with you, my commandant?" asked old Maria.

"Maria," he replied, "to-day is the 15th of June, my saint's day—a day sadly memorable in the anniversaries of my life. Oh, San Modesto! Is it possible that you can treat me so, on the very day that the Church celebrates you?"

"But what has happened?" asked tia Maria, anxiously.

"Look here," said the veteran, lifting his arm and disclosing a great rent in his uniform, through which appeared the white lining, like a set of teeth displayed by a broad grin.

Don Modesto was identified with his uniform, with it he would have lost the last trace of his profession.

"What a misfortune!" said Maria, sadly.

"It has already caused Rosita a nervous attack," continued Don Modesto.

"His Excellency begs the Señor Commandant to step into his room," said a servant, entering the court at that moment.

Don Modesto drew himself up very proudly; he held in his hand a sheet of paper carefully folded and sealed, and kept the arm under which was the unfortunate rent, pressed as tightly as possible against his body.

Following the servant, he presented himself before the duke, saluted him respectfully, and said,—

"I wish your Excellency a prosperous journey, and trust you will find the duchess and all the family in perfect health. I also take the liberty of imploring your Excellency to place this representation relating to the fort I have the honour to command, in the hands of the Minister of War. Your

Excellency has been able to judge for yourself how necessary it is that the Castle of San Cristobal should be repaired, especially now that they talk of a war with the Emperor of Morocco."

"My dear Don Modesto," replied the duke, "I cannot answer for the result of this application, I should rather advise you to place a cross on the turrets of the fort, as they do on a tomb; but to make up, I promise you that I will urge them to send you your long arrears of pay."

This agreeable promise scarcely effaced the sad impression left on the commandant's mind by the sentence of death, which the duke had pronounced on his fort.

"Meanwhile," continued the duke, pointing to a chair near him, "I beg that you will accept this as a remembrance of a friend."

What was the surprise of the good man

to see spread out on the chair a complete uniform, new and brilliant, with epaulets worthy to adorn the shoulders of the first captain of the age!

Don Modesto, as was only natural, stood rooted to the spot, amazed, confused, and dazzled at the sight of so much splendour and magnificence.

"I hope, señor," said the duke, "that you may live long enough, for this uniform to serve you as long as the other."

"Ah! Señor Excelentisimo," replied Don Modesto, recovering little by little the use of his tongue; "this is too much for me!"

"Not so, not so," replied the other; "how many there are who wear richer uniforms than this, without deserving them as much. I know," he continued; "that you have an excellent friend and landlady, to whom you would not be sorry to make a present. Do me the favour to present her with this small

trifle." It was a rosary of gold filigree and coral.

Before Don Modesto could recover from his astonishment, the duke had turned away to the family whom he had sent for, in order to express his gratitude for their kindness, and to give each member something to remember him by. Unlike many rich people, he did not do good in a contemptuous and therefore offensive manner, which cannot fail to wound, but acted as those do who are not favoured by fortune, in studying each person's particular taste and necessity. So that all the inmates of the monastery received what they most needed, or what would give them most pleasure: Manuel, a large cloak and a good watch; Momo, a complete suit of clothes, a waistband of yellow silk, and a gun; the women and children, dresses and toys; Anis, a paper kite of such vast dimensions, that,

when he carried it off, on his shoulder, he looked like a mouse behind the shield of Achilles.

To tia Maria, the illustrious guest's indefatigable nurse and skilful maker of strengthening broth, the duke assigned a pension for life.

Poor Brother Gabriel received nothing. He made so little noise in the world, and had hidden himself so completely from the duke's sight, that the latter was not even aware of his existence.

Old Maria, without any one observing her, cut off some yards from one of the pieces of linen which the duke had given her, and adding two cotton handkerchiefs to it, went in search of her *protégé*.

"Here, Brother Gabriel," she said, "this is a present from the duke. I'll undertake to make the shirt."

Gabriel was even more amazed than the

commandant; he was more than modest—he was humble.

All being ready for the journey, the duke came into the court.

"*Adios!* Momo, pride of Villamar!" said Marisalada, "if I have seen you, I don't remember you."

"*Adios!* Gaviota!" was his reply, "if everybody felt your going as does the son of my mother, the bells would ring as if they had wings."

Tio Pedro remained seated on the marble steps. Old Maria was by his side, crying as if her heart would break.

"One would think," said Marisalada, "that I was going to China, and that you never expected to see me again in this life. I tell you we shall return. Why, this is like a gipsy's funeral! At all events, you're determined to damp the pleasure of my visit to the capital!"

"Mother," remonstrated Manuel, grieved at the sight of her sorrow, "if you weep such jars full of tears on this occasion, what will you do when I die?"

"I shan't have time to weep, then, son of my heart!" replied his mother, smiling through her tears.

The horses arrived.

Stein threw himself into tia Maria's arms.

"Don't forget us, Don Federico," said the old woman, sobbing. "You must return!"

"If I do not," he said, "it will be because I am dead."

The duke had arranged that Marisalada should mount her mule at once, in order that she might be spared the pain of taking leave.

The animal set off at a trot, followed by the others, and the whole cavalcade

soon disappeared behind an angle of the monastery.

The poor father stretched out his arms towards his daughter. "I shall never see her again," he cried, half-suffocated with grief, letting his face fall on the steps of the cross.

The travellers went on their way, at full trot. Stein, on arriving at the Calvario, comforted his heart by a fervent prayer to the Lord of Good Help, whose benign influence extends over that district, as light surrounds the luminary that gives it.

Rosa Mistica was at her window as the travellers crossed the village-square. "Holy Virgin!" she exclaimed, on seeing Marisalada riding side by side with the duke. "She will neither look at me nor salute me. *Vaya!* The demon of pride has already taken possession of her heart. I'll wager," she added, putting her head out of the

window, "that she'll not even salute the padre cura, who is standing in the church-porch. She does, though; but it's only because the duke set her the example. Hola! he is stopping to speak to him, and he's giving him a purse,—that's for the poor! He's a good-hearted gentleman, and very liberal. He has done a great deal of good. God reward him!"

Rosa Mistica was yet in ignorance of the double surprise which awaited her.

As Stein passed he waved his hand sadly.

"God bless you!" said Rosa, waving a handkerchief in return. "That's a good man. He wept like a child yesterday, when he wished me good-by. What a pity it is that he doesn't remain here; and he would if it were not for that fool of a Gaviota, as Momo justly calls her!"

The travellers had arrived at the top of a hill, and began to descend.

The houses of Villamar soon disappeared from Stein's sight, who kept his eyes fixed as long as possible on a spot where he had lived so quietly and happily.

Meanwhile, the duke was devoting himself to the unnecessary task of consoling Marisalada, drawing for her flattering pictures of the future.

Stein had no thought but for the scenes he was leaving. The cross of the Calvario, and the chapel of our Lord of Good Help, disappeared from his view. Then the great mass of the monastery seemed to sink little by little into the earth. At length, of all this quiet corner of the world, the ruins of the fort were alone visible, their dark masses appearing on the blue horizon—the tower pointing, as the poet has expressed it, like a finger, with mute eloquence, to heaven.

Then all vanished, and Stein hid his tears, covering his face with his hands.

CHAPTER XV.

The month of July had been extremely hot in Seville. The evening parties were held in those delicious courts where beautiful marble fountains with their playful jets, are almost hidden by masses of bright-coloured flowers. From the ceilings of the corridors which surrounded the courts, hung large lanterns or globes of glass, spreading a flood of light around them.

The flowers perfumed the air, the beauty and splendour of the scene were enhanced by rich furniture and ornaments, but most of all by the fair Sevillians, whose lively and

animated conversation vied with the soft murmur of the fountains.

One evening, towards the end of the month, there was a large party at the house of the young and beautiful Countess of Algar. It was considered a great honour to be introduced at this house, and yet nothing was more easy, for the hostess was so amiable and accessible, that she received every one with the same smile and the same cordiality. The readiness with which she admitted all who were presented to her, was not quite to the taste of her uncle, General Santa Maria, a soldier of the time of Napoleon, warlike in the extreme, and, as soldiers of that period usually are, somewhat brusque, a little exclusive, and just a trifle absolute and haughty; in fine, a classic son of Mars, fully convinced that all relations between men consist in commanding or obeying, and that the object and principal use of

society is thus to classify each of its members.

For the rest, he was as Spanish as Pelago, and as brave as the Cid.

The general, his sister, the Marchioness of Guadalcanal, the countess's mother, and some others were playing at ombre.

Some of the company, walking in the corridors, were talking politics; the young people of both sexes, were seated near the flowers, chatting and laughing, as though the earth produced only flowers, and the air resounded only with merry laughter.

The countess was half-reclining on a sofa, complaining of a severe headache, which however did not prevent her being gay and agreeable. She was small, delicate, and fair as alabaster. Her thick auburn hair waved in ringlets, English fashion; her large grey eyes, her nose, her teeth, her mouth, her oval face, were models of perfection; her

beauty, incomparable. Dearly loved by her mother, adored by her husband, who, disliking society, yet allowed her full liberty, having perfect confidence in her prudence,—the countess was in truth a spoilt child. But thanks to her excellent disposition, she did not abuse her privileges as such. Although without great intellectual powers, she had that greatest talent, a heart; she felt well and delicately. Her ambition was limited to enjoying herself and amusing others, like the bird which flies without knowing it, and sings without effort.

That evening she had returned tired, and somewhat indisposed, from a walk. She had taken off her dress and put on a simple white muslin wrapper, and her white rounded arms were visible through the lace of her falling sleeves. Near her was sitting a young colonel, recently come from Madrid, after having distinguished himself in the

war of Navarra. The countess, who was no dissembler, kept all her attention fixed on him. General Santa Maria looked at them from time to time, biting his lips with impatience.

"New fruit!" he said. "She would no longer be a daughter of Eve if novelty didn't please her. What a coxcomb! Twenty-four years old and already a colonel! When was such prodigality of promotion ever seen? Only five or six years ago he was at school, and now he commands a regiment! No doubt they'll come and tell us that he gained his steps by brilliant actions; but I say that courage doesn't give experience, and that without experience no man is fit to command. A colonel in the army at four-and-twenty! I was so at forty, after having been at Roussillon, in America, and Portugal; and didn't get my General's sash till my return from the north, with La Romana,

and after I had fought in the war of Independence. The truth is, Señores, we've all turned fools in Spain,—some for what they have done, others for what they have not done."

At this moment loud exclamations were heard. The countess roused from her languor, sprung up quickly.

"At last! Here comes the lost one!" she exclaimed. "A thousand welcomes, unfortunate hunter and ill-used knight! What a fright you've given us! But how's this? You're just as if nothing had happened. Is it true what they say about a wonderful German doctor who appeared between the ruins of a fort and a monastery, as if evoked by magic? Tell us, duke, all these extraordinary things."

The duke, after having received the congratulations of all present on his return and recovery, took a seat opposite the

countess and entered into a narration of all that the reader knows. At last, after talking a great deal about Stein and Maria, he concluded by saying that he had persuaded them to establish themselves in Seville, to utilize and make known—he, his knowledge; and she, the extraordinary gifts with which nature had favoured her.

"A great mistake," pronounced the general, in a resolute tone.

The countess turned round quickly to her uncle. "And why is it a great mistake, señor?" she asked.

"Because those people," replied the general, "were living contented, and without ambition, and from this time forward they won't be able to say as much. There is a Spanish comedy, with a title, which is also a proverb, 'No one should leave certainty for uncertainty.'"

"Do you believe, uncle," answered the

countess, "that this woman, with her remarkable voice, will regret the rock to which she was fixed like an oyster, without advantage or glory, for herself, for society, or for the arts?"

"Come, now, niece, do you seriously want to make us believe that human society will advance much, because a woman appears on the stage, and sings *Di tanti palpiti?*"

"*Vaya*," said the countess, "one knows well that you are not a lover of music."

"And I thank God that I am not," retorted the general. "Do you wish me to lose my judgment, as many have lost theirs, with this mania for melody, with this inundation of notes, that throughout Europe has spread like an avalanche? Would you have me go and swell, with my foolish enthusiasm, the portentous pride of these kings and queens of quavers? Would you wish my money to be swallowed up among their enor-

mous gains, while so many good officers, covered with scars, are dying of hunger? While so many really deserving Christian women pass their lives in tears, without a morsel of bread to put into their mouths? It is this that cries out to heaven, and it is a shameful *sarcasm*, as they call it now, in a period when one hears nothing from the mouths of chattering hypocrites, but the word 'humanity!' Fancy my throwing bouquets to a *prima donna*, whose only recommendation is her do, re, mi, fa, sol!"

"My uncle," said the countess, "is the very personification of the *statu quo*. Everything new disgusts him. I mean to get old as soon as possible, in order to please him."

"Don't do that, niece," replied the general, "but, at the same time, don't insist that I should make myself young again, to flatter the present generation."

"What is my brother arguing about?"

asked the marchioness, who, occupied with the game, had not taken part in the conversation.

"My uncle," said a young officer, who had entered unnoticed, and was sitting by the duke; "my uncle is preaching a crusade against music. He has declared war against Andantes, proscribes Moderatos, and gives no quarter even to Allegros."

"My dear Rafael," exclaimed the duke, embracing the officer, who was a relative of his, and to whom he was much attached.

He was small, but of gentlemanly appearance, well-made, and graceful. His face was, perhaps, too pretty for a man.

"And I," replied the officer, pressing the duke's hands, "I, who would willingly have had both legs cut off, sooner than you should have suffered! But we are talking of the opera, and I mustn't sing in melodramatic tone."

"Well said," answered the duke. "It would be much better that you should tell me what has been going on here in my absence. What is the latest news?"

"That my cousin, the Countess of Algar, is the pearl of Seville."

"I asked you for news," said the duke, "not for what every one knows."

"Duke," continued Rafael, "Solomon said, and many wise men, myself among others, have repeated, 'that there is nothing new under the blue canopy of heaven.'"

"Would that it were so!" said the general, sighing; "but my nephew Rafael Arias is a living contradiction of his own axiom. He's always bringing new faces to our *tertulias*, which is insufferable."

"There goes my uncle, waging war against all foreigners," said Rafael; "a foreigner is General Santa Maria's bugbear. If you hadn't named me your aide-

de-camp, my Lord Duke, when you were Minister of War, I shouldn't have made so many acquaintances among the foreign diplomatists at Madrid, and they wouldn't have pestered my life out with letters of recommendation. Do you suppose, uncle, that it's very amusing to me to act as *cicerone*, as I have done, since coming to Seville, for every tourist?"

"And who obliges us," replied the general, "to throw our doors wide open to every one who comes, and to put ourselves under their orders? They don't do so in Paris, and much less in London."

"Each nation has its peculiar character," said the countess; "and every society its own customs. Foreigners are more reserved than we are, even among themselves. Let us be just."

"Have any arrived lately?" asked the duke. "I inquire, because I am expecting

Lord G., who is one of the most distinguished men I know. Has he arrived in Seville?"

"He has not yet come," answered Rafael. "At present, we have here, in the first place, Major Fly, whom we call *La Mosca*, which is the meaning of his name. He's in the Queen's Guards, and is a nephew of the Duke of W., one of the greatest men in England."

"Yes! as much nephew to the Duke of W. as I am to the Grand Turk!" said the general.

"He is young, nice-looking, and a good fellow," continued Rafael, "but such a colossus in size, that one's obliged to stand at some distance from him in order to take him all in at once. When too near he appears so big, so stout, so angular, and so coarse, that he loses cent. per cent. When he's not at table, he's always at my side,

whether indoors or out; when my servant tells him I am not at home, he answers that he'll wait for me, and then as he comes in by the door, I go out by the window. He has a trick of fencing with his cane, and although his lunges are perfectly harmless, as he only thrusts at the air, yet his arm is so long and so strong, and my room so small, that he has made holes in my walls, and broken several panes in the window. When he sits down, he rocks himself backwards and forwards, fidgets, and leans back so heavily with his legs stretched out, that he has already broken four chairs. My landlady flies into a rage whenever she sees him. Sometimes he takes up a book—the best thing that can happen, because then he goes to sleep. But his hobby, his one idea, and his hope, is his conquests. He has the same notion with regard to the fair sex that the countryman had about dollars, when he set

off to Mexico, thinking they were to be had there for the trouble of picking them up. I've tried to undeceive him, but it's like preaching in the desert; when I reason with him he smiles incredulously, and strokes his enormous moustaches. He's engaged to an immensely rich heiress, and the fun is that this thirty-years-old Ajax, who devours three pounds of beefsteak, and drinks three bottles of sherry at a sitting, has persuaded his *fiancée* that he's obliged to travel for his health. The other *impostor*, as my uncle would call him, is a Frenchman—the Baron de Maude."

"Baron!" said the general, with a sneer, "as much a baron as I'm the Pope."

"For goodness sake, uncle," said the countess, "why shouldn't he be a baron?"

"Because, niece," he replied, "real barons (I don't mean those of the time of Napoleon, or of the Constitution, but those of the good

old times) didn't travel and write books for money, nor were they so ill-bred, curious, and tiresomely inquisitive."

"But surely, uncle, one may be a baron and yet inquisitive. Asking questions doesn't deprive one of nobility. On his return home he is going to marry the daughter of a peer of France."

"He'll marry her," said the general, "as much as I shall marry the Grand Turk."

"My uncle," said Arias, "is like Saint Thomas, he must see before he'll believe. But to return to our baron. It must be owned that he's a very presentable sort of person, although, like myself, he was born a little before his time. He is amiable, and, by way of being literary, he talks equally well on politics or art, history or music, statistics, philosophy, farming, or fashion. He's now writing a work of importance, as

he calls it, which is to serve as his stepping-stone to the Chamber of Deputies. It is called 'Travels—Scientific, Philosophical, Physiological, Artistic, and Geological—through Spain (anciently Iberia); with Critical Observations on its Government, Cookery, Literature, Roads and Canals, Agriculculture, Dances, and Tributary System.' Studiously negligent in his dress; grave, circumspect, economical in the extreme, he is an imperfect fruit from that hothouse of public men, which gives forth premature productions, without spring-time, without animating breezes, without fresh air, without flavour or perfume. These men dash into the future at full steam, in pursuit of what they call a position, and to it they sacrifice everything else; sad, painful existences, where the day of life has no morning!"

"Rafael, this is philosophy," said the duke, smiling; "do you know that if

Socrates were living, you would be much more his disciple than my aide-de-camp?"

"I would rather be an aide-de-camp, than an apostle, my general," replied Arias; "but the truth is, that if there were not so many ignorant disciples, there wouldn't be so many bad masters."

"Well said, nephew," exclaimed the old general, "so many new masters! and each teaches and preaches, some doctrine newer and wilder than the last. Progress! magnificent and never well considered progress!"

"General," retorted the duke, "in order to maintain the equilibrium of this our globe, there must be fluids and solids, both forces should regard one another reciprocally as necessary, instead of seeking to destroy one another with such animosity."

"These," said the general, "are the doc-

trines of the detestable levellers, who do more harm than even the moderationists; because they wrap up their abominable opinions in fine words, and plausible sentiments, like hypocrites as they are, shows peel full of rotten pulp."

"My uncle," said Rafael, "hates the *Moderatos* so much, that he loses all *moderation* in order to fight them."

"Hold your tongue, Rafael," replied the countess; "you argue, and make fun of every opinion, and have none of your own, that you would care to take the trouble of defending."

"Cousin," exclaimed Rafael, "I am *liberal*, my empty purse proves that."

"What have you to do with being a *liberal?*" shouted the general in a stentorian voice.

"Why shouldn't I be so, señor? The duke is."

"What have you to do with being a liberal?" repeated the general in a voice as loud and angry as the roll of a drum.

"*Vamos!*" muttered Rafael; "apparently, my uncle won't allow anything to be liberal, but the arts that are so called."

"Señor," he added, turning to his uncle, whom he had a malicious pleasure in putting into a rage, "why may not the duke be liberal? Who can prevent him if it's his whim to be liberal? Will he be any uglier for being liberal? Why mayn't we be liberal, señor, why?"

"Because a soldier," replied the general, "has no business to be anything but the supporter of the throne, the preserver of order and the defender of his country,—do you understand, nephew?"

"But, uncle—"

"Rafael," interrupted the countess,

"don't get out of your depth,—go on with your story."

"I obey—ah! cousin, in the army under your command insubordination will never be known.

"We have another foreigner in Seville, one Sir John Burnwood. A young man of about fifty, handsome and smiling, with a mane like a genuine lion of Mount Atlas; eye-glass a fixture, smile ditto, a great chatterer and busybody, very fond of betting, a first-rate sportsman, and owner of vast coal-mines which produce him £20,000 a-year."

"You mean," said the general, "20,000 pounds of coal."

"My uncle," said Rafael, "is like the stockjobbers who can raise or lower the value of property at their pleasure. Sir John laid a wager that he would ride to the top of the Giralda on horseback, and that

was his great object in coming to Seville. It's true that one of our ancient kings did it; but the poor horse couldn't get down again, and remained there hanging between heaven and earth, like Mahomet's coffin, so they had to kill him in his elevated position. Sir John is in despair, at not being allowed to enjoy this royal pastime. Now, he wants, after the manner of Lord Elgin and Baron Taylor, to buy the Alcazar, and carry it away to his baronial estate, stone by stone, —not omitting those which, as they say, are indelibly stained with the blood of Don Fadrique, whom his brother, Don Pedro, the king, caused to be murdered five hundred years ago."

"There is nothing," said the general, "that these '*Sirs*' are not capable of, nor any idea, however wild, that they don't entertain."

"More than that," continued Rafael, "the

other day he asked me if I could get the chapter of the cathedral to sell him the gilt keys that the Moorish king presented in a silver dish to San Fernando, when he conquered Seville; also the agate cup out of which the great king used to drink."

The general struck such a blow on the table that one of the candlesticks fell to the ground.

"Don't you see, general," said the duke, "that Rafael colours his pictures too highly, and that all he is telling us is extravagant nonsense?"

"There is no extravagance," said the general, "which would be improbable in an Englishman."

"But the best has yet to come," continued Rafael, fixing his eyes on a pretty girl who was sitting by the marchioness, watching her play at cards. "Sir John is desperately in love with my cousin Rita, and has made her

an offer. Rita, who absolutely doesn't know how to pronounce the monosyllable '*Yes*,' gave him a '*No*,' as short and sharp as a cannon-shot."

"Is it possible, Ritita," asked the duke, "that you have refused twenty thousand a-year?"

"I didn't refuse the income," replied the young girl, coolly, without lifting her eyes from the game. "What I refused was its owner."

"You did well," said the general; "every one should marry in his own country, then cats are not mistaken for hares."

"You did well, indeed," added the marchioness. "A Protestant! God forbid!"

"And what do you say, countess?" asked the duke.

"I agree with my mother," she replied. "It is no joking matter, when the husband is of a different religion from his wife. I

think, with my uncle, that every one should marry in his own country, and I agree with Rita, that I would never marry a man only because he had twenty thousand a-year."

Rita was niece to the marchioness, and to the general. She was left an orphan at a very early age, and was brought up by her brother, who loved her tenderly, and by her nurse, who adored her, and did her best to spoil her, but without success, for she was a thoroughly good, although a peculiar girl. The isolation and independence in which the first years of her life were passed, had impressed the double seal of timidity and decision on her character. She was one of those persons who are often considered dull and heavy, because they are averse to noise and display. She was at once haughty and kind, capricious and simple-minded, playful and reserved. She was as beautiful in person as she was piquante

in character. She was of medium height, and her figure, which owed nothing to art, had all that freedom and flexibility which French novelists falsely attribute to their whalebone-cased heroines. It is to this graceful suppleness of body, united with frank and natural manners, so enchanting when combined with beauty and goodness, that the Spanish women owe their farfamed attractions. Rita's complexion was remarkably fair, as clear and uniform as a marble statue; her beautiful hair was black, her large, dark-gray eyes were fringed with long lashes, and crowned with eyebrows that seemed as if drawn by the hand of Murillo. Her rosy lips, now and then half-opened, displaying teeth of pearly whiteness, as a sudden and joyous peal of laughter burst from her, checked, however, almost instantly by her habitual reserve; for nothing was so painful to her as to attract attention. When

this happened she was sure to lose her temper. In accordance with a vow made to the *Virgen de los Dolores*, she always dressed in black, wearing a waistband of varnished leather, and a small gold heart, pierced by a sword, on her sleeve.

Rita was the only woman her cousin Rafael Arias had ever loved; not with a lachrymose romantic passion, which was not in his nature (than which, one more unsentimental, could scarcely have been found), but with a strong, sincere, and constant affection. Rafael, who was an excellent fellow, noble in mind, as well as in birth, and owner of a large estate—was the very husband of all others that her friends desired for her. But she, notwithstanding her brother's vigilance, had given her heart to a young man of good family and handsome appearance, but a gambler, on which account her brother opposed the

match, and strictly forbade her seeing or speaking to him. Rita, with a firmness of character and Spanish perseverance, worthy of a better cause, waited patiently without complaints, sighs, or tears, till her twenty-first birthday should arrive, when she could marry as she pleased, in spite of her brother's opposition. Meanwhile, her lover rode up and down the street, splendidly mounted, and dressed *a lo majo*, and they corresponded daily. That evening Rita had entered, as usual, in perfect silence, and had seated herself in her accustomed place, by her aunt, that she might see her play. The marchioness did not know her niece had come in until she heard the duke ask her whether she had really refused Sir John Burnwood's offer. Then she exclaimed,—

"Why, Rita, what a fright you have given me! How did you get here without any one knowing it?"

"Would you wish me to march in with drums and trumpets, like a regiment?"

"At least," said the marchioness, "you might have saluted the company."

"The card-players would have been disturbed," said Rita. "Look at your cards, and you'll see I'm right. Diamonds are played, and you're going to revoke through scolding me."

During this dialogue, Rafael seated himself behind his cousin, and whispered in her ear,—"Rita, when am I to ask for the dispensation?"

"When I tell you," she replied, without turning her head.

"And what can I do to merit the arrival of that happy moment?"

"Pray to my saint, who is patroness of all impossibilities!"

"Cruel one! Some day you'll repent

having refused my hand. You will lose the best and most grateful of husbands."

"And you the worst and most ungrateful of wives."

"I say, Rita! has our uncle opposite any attraction in his head that prevents you turning your face to the person you are talking to?"

"I have a stiff neck."

"Which stiff neck is called Luis de Haro. Are you still infatuated with that consumer of cards?"

"More than ever."

"And what does your brother say?"

"If you wish to know, you can ask him."

"And you will let me die?"

"Without moving an eyelash."

"I've made a vow to the devil at the feet of St. Michael, to gild his horn, if some day he will carry off Luis de Haro."

"Pray wish him ill! The ill-will of the envious fattens?"

"It seems that I bore you," said Rafael, after some moments of silence, on seeing his cousin yawn.

"Have you only just discovered that?" replied Rita.

"That means, you wish me away. Well, I'll go, then, as Luis Pack-o'cards is so jealous."

"Jealous of you!" replied his cousin, with one of her sudden laughs; "he's about as jealous of you as he is of the fat Englishman!"

"Thank you for the comparison, amiable cousin, and farewell for ever."

"As you please," replied Rita, without turning her head.

Rafael got up in a rage.

"What's the matter, Rafael?" asked a young girl, languidly, as he passed in front

of her. The new speaker had just arrived from Madrid, where an important lawsuit had required her father's presence. She had returned from her expedition completely modernized, and so thoroughly inoculated with what she was pleased to call foreign *bon ton*, that she made herself insufferably ridiculous. Her incessant occupation was reading novels, nearly always French ones. She professed a sort of worship for fashion, adored music, and depreciated everything Spanish. On hearing her question, Rafael tried to compose himself, and answered,—

"Eloisita, I have lived a day more than I had yesterday, and I have one less to live."

"I know all about it, Rafael, and how much you suffer."

"Well, then, tell me, for goodness' sake, Eloisita, what is the matter with me. It's a work of charity to teach the ignorant."

"You know well enough!"

"What is it, then?"

"A *deception*," murmured Eloisa.

"A what?" asked Rafael, who had not heard her.

"An illusion."

"Oh! I see. I understood you to say a *desertion*, and my military honour was horrified; as for illusions, I've a hundred, my friend, like every other man. They are pleasant for the time being."

"But there is one in particular which darkens your life, and induces you to look upon the tomb as a rest from sorrow, and upon death as a smiling friend."

"Ah, Eloisita!" replied Rafael, "I would have given one of my fingers to have had such thoughts in the battle of Mendigorria, when they carried me to the hospital with a bullet in my side. Confound it! neither death nor the tomb appeared to me in a particularly cheerful light."

"How prosaic you are!" exclaimed Eloisa, indignantly.

"Is that an anathema, Eloisa?"

"No, señor," she replied, ironically; "it is a magnificent compliment."

"I will tell you what is plain truth, and no compliment," said Rafael; "and that is, that you look very pretty in that headdress, and that your dress is in the best possible taste."

"Does it please you," exclaimed the young girl, suddenly dropping her sentimental tone. "The material is the latest '*nouveauté*.'"

"It isn't extraordinary," said Rafael, "that that Englishman in front of you, whose head towers above all the plants in the flower-stand, should be in love with Spain, and the Spanish ladies."

"What bad taste!" said Eloisa, contemptuously.

"He says," continued Rafael, "that there

is nothing so pretty on earth, as a Spanish lady with her mantilla, and that it is that dress that makes them so attractive."

"What an injustice!" exclaimed the young girl. "Perhaps he thinks that bonnets are too elegant for us?"

"He says," continued Rafael, "that you handle your fans with inimitable grace."

"What a calumny!" said Eloisa, "the *elegantas* never use them now."

"He says, that those tiny feet of yours, so small and so pretty, are crying out for silk stockings and slippers, instead of those frightful boots and *brodequines*, or whatever you call them."

"That's quite insulting," cried Eloisa, "it's as much as asking us to go back half-a-century, as the illustrated Madrid paper very justly remarks."

"That the black eyes of the Spanish women are the loveliest in the world."

"What vulgarity! They are the eyes of the lower orders, of cook-maids, and cigar-women."

"That their light, graceful manner of walking is the most enchanting thing he could imagine."

"But doesn't this gentleman know that he looks upon us as parias?" said Eloisa, "and that we are doing all we can to improve ourselves, and to behave as we ought?"

"You had better try and convert him," replied Arias. "I'll introduce him to you."

Rafael hastened away, thinking, "Eloisa is very tender-hearted and romantic, and will just suit the major, who is great at hunting such small game."

Meanwhile, the countess had asked the duke whether the nightingale of Villamar was pretty.

"She is neither pretty nor ugly," he re-

plied. "She is a brunette, and her features are not regular. She has good eyes;—in short, she has the sort of face that you may see anywhere in our country."

"As her voice is so extraordinary, for the honour of Seville we must make an eminent prima-donna of her. Can't we hear her?"

"Whenever you please," replied the duke. "I will bring her here some evening with her husband, who is an excellent musician, and has been her master."

It was now time for the reunion to break up.

When the duke approached the countess to take leave of her, she raised her finger with a threatening air.

"What does that mean?" asked the duke.

"Nothing, nothing," she replied; "it only means 'take care.'"

"Take care? Of what?"

"Do you pretend not to understand me? No one is so deaf as he who won't hear."

"You put me on thorns, countess."

"So much the better."

"Will you, for goodness' sake, explain yourself?"

"I will, as you force me. When I say *take care*, I mean take care that you don't get entangled."

"Ah, countess!" replied the duke, warmly. "For God's sake, do not allow an unjust and false suspicion to sully the reputation of this woman, even before any one knows her. I assure you, countess, she is an angel."

"Of course," said the countess, "nobody falls in love with demons."

"Nevertheless, you have a thousand adorers," replied the duke, smiling.

"But then I am not a demon. I am a fortune-teller."

"The best archer may make a bad shot sometimes."

"Well, I'll give you six months from now, most invulnerable Achilles," replied the countess.

"Pray, pray be silent, countess," entreated the duke. "What in your pretty mouth is but a light jest, would be mortal poison in the mouths of the vipers who pollute society."

"Never mind. I shall not throw the first stone. I'm as indulgent as a saint, or as a great sinner, without being either the one or the other."

Little pleased with this conversation, the duke was making his way to the door, when he was stopped by the general, who exclaimed, "Duke, did you ever hear of such a thing before?"

"Did I ever hear of what?" inquired the duke, with some irritation.

"Do you ask of what!!!"

"Yes, I ask; and I desire a reply."

"A colonel at twenty-three."

"It certainly is rather young," said the duke, smiling.

"It's a blow to the army."

"No doubt of it."

"It's giving the lie direct to common-sense."

"Most certainly."

"Poor Spain!" exclaimed the general, giving his hand to the duke, and raising his eyes to heaven.

END OF VOL. I.

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